

Environmental Stewardship

What is Environmental Stewardship?

Environmental Stewardship can mean different things to different people. Here at NJDEP, we want to know how your business voluntarily goes beyond the minimum regulatory requirements we enforce, resulting in a positive benefit to the environment.

Why should my business become an Environmental Steward?

We believe implementing Environmental Stewardship practices will result in many positive benefits for your company.

These can include:

- saving costs and adding value,
- potentially reducing your site's regulatory responsibilities,
- improving environmental performance and reducing liability, and
- providing you with a competitive advantage due to more effective and efficient operations.

Don't underestimate the benefits that come from knowing your business has done its part to ensure that a healthy and safe environment is passed on to future generations.

Is it hard to be recognized by NJDEP as an Environmental Steward?

It's not as hard as you might think. Inspectors verify stewardship primarily through an interview process, entering information provided by you about your stewardship activities on a special checklist. You'll need to be able to explain to the inspector how each activity for which you are seeking stewardship recognition is environmentally beneficial.

Isn't Environmental Stewardship only for big corporations who can afford it?

Definitely not. Even small businesses can get great value from implementing environmental stewardship practices, many of which are implementable at little or no cost. For example, you could draft and implement an environmental purchasing policy for your business. This policy would provide standards and guidance for everyone in your organization.

Is your business an Environmental Steward already?

It may be. There are 21 categories in which you can be recognized for environmental stewardship. Some are simple and some are more complex, but all are of value to both the environment ***and are likely already your company's bottom line.*** Recognizable environmental stewardship activities include, but are not limited to, having a corporate environmental policy, mentoring to other businesses, implementing energy and water efficiencies, reducing the hazardous and other waste materials you generate, cutting down on the environmental impact of your staff's commuting activities, and many other sustainable actions. Examples of qualifying stewardship activities are on the back of this document.

I think my business qualifies for stewardship recognition. What should I do?

Simply talk to your NJDEP inspector at your next inspection. You can also email Environmental Stewardship questions to stewardship@dep.nj.gov or the Bureau of Compliance Support & Pollution Prevention can be contacted at (609) 984-9482.

Is there more detailed guidance and information on NJDEP's Environmental Stewardship Program?

Yes! We want your business to succeed as a steward of the environment. Check out our stewardship website at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/stewardship/> Here you will find additional guidance, FAQs, participating sites and more.

| | Category | Example of Qualifying Stewardship practice |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | Environmental Policy | Write a policy (1-page document) that explains your company's environmental goals and policies. |
| 2 | Environmental Management System | Sites can obtain ISO 140001 certification or develop and utilize their own EMS to annually (or more frequently) evaluate their environmental performance. |
| 3 | Annual Environmental Report | Yearly report posted to your company web page that explains your company's environmental performance for the past year. |
| 4 | Carbon Footprint | Report that shows all greenhouse gas emissions. Must include both onsite and offsite contributions. |
| 5 | Environmental Purchasing Policy | Establish an Environmental Purchasing Policy that requires the purchase of environmentally responsible products whenever possible. |
| 6 | Vendor/Supply Chain Requirements | Establish vendor requirements/contracts with businesses that supply your company to ensure environmentally sound business practices are employed. |
| 7 | Mentoring Other Businesses | Does the site offer mentoring of an environmental nature to other businesses? If yes, describe the mentoring program and any available contact information the site can provide. |
| 8 | Outreach Program | Participate or offer assistance to community leaders and local groups to address, educate and collaborate on environmental issues in the community. |
| 9 | Green Building Certification | Obtain LEED building certification (or other recognized green building certification) for new or major building renovation projects. |
| 10 | Green Building Implementation | Utilize green building design concepts in new construction or renovation projects. No formal certification by LEED is required. |
| 11 | Life Cycle Assessments | Conduct a detailed LCA of any products or site services/activities to evaluate environmental impacts, determine inefficiencies and institute improvements. |
| 12 | Hazardous Materials Reduction | Reduce the amount of hazardous materials used at your facility or exchange your use of high hazard materials for less hazardous materials. |
| 13 | Water Use Reduction | Implement changes at your facility that result in reduced water use. Examples: installation of water saving fixtures, grey water recycling systems, reuse of production waste water, rain water harvesting systems, etc. |
| 14 | Material Conservation | Conserve materials used at your site by changing process, product or formulations, participate in waste exchanges, reuse operational waste, etc. Materials required to be recycled by the State or your County do not qualify. |
| 15 | Employee Trip Reduction | Provide a program to reduce or eliminate employee commuting trips to the workplace. Examples: telework program, flexible work schedules, incentives to carpool or use public transportation, etc. |
| 16 | Process/Operations Energy Use Reduction | Reduce energy use associated with onsite processes or production operation. Examples: VFD motors on equipment, solar powered equipment or lights, etc. |
| 17 | Transportation Energy Use Reduction | Reduce transportation energy use by upgrading company fleet to hybrid Vehicles or electric vehicles, switching to cleaner burning fuels, etc. |
| 18 | Renewable Energy Use | Major installations, such as solar panels or wind turbines, to generate renewable energy for onsite use; or you can purchase energy from a green energy power provider. |
| 19 | Environmental Enhancement Project | Reclamation projects at your site or in the community, such as a wildlife habitat restoration, rain gardens, invasive species weed control, or use of native species. |
| 20 | Innovative Program | Any environmental activity not recognized under other stewardship categories, such as being a member of a state sponsored voluntary program (i.e. NJ Clean Marina program). |
| 21 | EPA Voluntary Program | Become a participating member/partner of an EPA Voluntary Program. |