

Permitting

Permitting Process Improvements

Improve DTSC's ability to issue protective, timely, and enforceable permits using more transparent standards and consistent procedures.

Goal: The issuance of permits for the management of hazardous waste at treatment, storage, and disposal facilities is a fundamental regulatory activity performed by DTSC. This work plan is designed to strengthen the Department's hazardous waste facilities permitting program to be more protective and timely, while enhancing enforcement; using more transparent standards and consistent procedures; incorporating early public involvement in decision-making; and identifying and addressing environmental justice concerns early in permitting actions. Please note that the actions outlined below represent *highlights* of the more comprehensive Permitting Enhancement Work Plan. To see all deliverables, please visit:

https://dtsc.ca.gov/InformationResources/upload/Permitting_Enhancement_Workplan.pdf

Background: DTSC understands and acknowledges that providing clarity and instilling confidence in its permitting process is of paramount importance to its mission. External and internal reviews have brought to light deficiencies in the process that have resulted in lengthy delays in permitting decisions and community concerns about DTSC's performance in making timely and equitable decisions. The Permitting Enhancement Work Plan is a comprehensive roadmap to guide the Department as it works to implement its broader vision for a more effective, protective, and equitable permitting system.

Timeline:

July 2014 – December 2014

- Identify and implement solutions to reduce the sources of variation in the permitting process, reduce the technical review time, and analyze new data to validate improvement.
- Develop a process flow chart to serve as a baseline for shared understanding, revisions, and improvements to the permit process.
- Review and, if necessary, modify duty statements for permitting staff to ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
- Memorialize the Peer Review process using written guidelines.
- Ensure permit writers and supervisors are using EnviroStor at the beginning of the permit process to develop a project-specific management plan that identifies and sets a timeline for the completion of major tasks.
- Begin the process of partnering with a contractor to facilitate statewide discussions to review and improve DTSC's public participation and community engagement practices.

January 2015 – June 2015

- Review and update the existing checklist for the Administrative and Technical review phases of the permit process to ensure clear and complete identification of each point in the process; train staff accordingly.
- Identify specific points in the permit process and describe scenarios that trigger involvement by other programs, including CEQA and Public Participation; establish a process to ensure regular coordination and communication between programs.
- Create a team to draft guidance that details how Notices of Deficiency fit into the statutory and regulatory requirements to initiate a permit denial or revocation.
- Create a process to update existing protocols, such as calculating when financial assurance for closure and corrective action is adequate to protect human health and the environment.
- Implement a community workshop process as a communications and training tool to educate community members and other stakeholders about the permitting process.
- Develop standard operating procedures for the EnviroStor data management system.

Ongoing Work

- Ensure regular staff and supervisor meetings to discuss project statuses, coordinate on overall program issues, and help ensure consistency in work plan implementation.
- Create a searchable library on the SharePoint web platform that contains all documents pertaining to the Permitting Program, and ensure that information is up-to-date.
- Post a quarterly summary of permit activity at each facility on DTSC's webpage.
- Review existing training plans and create new training modules based on process improvements.

Beyond June 2015

- Create a Technical Advisory Group within the Permitting Program to help address permitting roadblocks.
- Develop and implement an enhanced review procedure – including a list of environmental health concerns and potential mitigation measures – for facilities in communities facing multiple pollution burdens and vulnerabilities.
- Establish a basis for proposing regulations that use technology selection and risk assessment protocols to meet public health and environmental protection requirements that apply to permits.