



FAQ for DEQ Staff on the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP)

The DEQ's partnership program, the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program or VEEP, is designed to augment the department's regulatory and enforcement programs. The program is aimed at improving environmental performance and stewardship through a beyond-compliance collaboration with the DEQ. This fact sheet was written to provide answers to the most commonly asked questions about the program. For promotional materials to distribute to facilities, please see DEQnet at deqnet/programs/veep/ or contact Sharon Baxter at Sharon.baxter@deq.virginia.gov.

What is the basis for the program?

The 2005 Virginia Assembly adopted legislation that provides the legal basis for the program. The law, which became effective on July 1, 2005, outlines the structure of the program, including the levels of participation (E2, E3, and E4), requirements for participation, annual reporting requirements and potential incentives (including a provision for alternate compliance methods available to E3 and E4 participants).

Who is eligible to participate in VEEP?

Any Virginia facility that impacts the environment through its operations, activities, processes, or location is eligible. The facility must have a good track record of sustained regulatory compliance and demonstrate a collaborative attitude in improving the environment and economy of the Commonwealth.

What is the structure of VEEP?

There are three types of participation in the program: Environmental Enterprise (E2), Exemplary Environmental Enterprise (E3), and the Extraordinary Environmental Enterprise (E4). The E2 level of participation is for those organizations that are interested in beginning or are in the early stages of implementing an environmental management system. The E3 level of participation is for those organizations with a fully-implemented EMS, pollution prevention program and demonstrated environmental performance. The E4 level is for a facility with both a fully-implemented environmental management system (that has been verified by a third party) that has committed to measures for continuous and sustainable environmental progress and community involvement. Participants at any level of the program must have a record of sustained compliance.

What is the compliance eligibility requirement?

As defined by Section 10.1-1187.1 of the Code of Virginia, record of sustained compliance means that "the person or facility (i) has no judgment or conviction entered against it, or against any key personnel of the person or facility or any person with an ownership interest in the facility for a criminal violation of the environmental protection laws of the United States, the Commonwealth, or any state in the previous five years; (ii) has been neither the cause of, nor liable for, more than two significant environmental violations in the previous three years; (iii) has no unresolved notices of violations or potential violations of environmental requirements with the Department or one of the Boards; (iv) is in compliance with the terms of any order or decree, executive compliance agreement, or related enforcement measure issued by the Department, one of the Boards, or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; and (v) has not demonstrated in any other way an unwillingness or inability to comply with environmental protection requirements."

Are there any reporting requirements for VEEP?

An annual report is required to remain a participant in good standing at all levels of the program. Facilities must show overall improvement in the operation of their EMS and pollution prevention program as well as no significant compliance issues to stay in the program.

How does DEQ define "environmental management system" (EMS)?

An EMS is simply a formal systematic process for reducing a facility's impacts on the environment by identifying potential impacts, setting goals to minimize those impacts, improving operating procedures, and tracking progress. The full cycle of an EMS is illustrated below. An EMS will be larger and more complex for a large facility but may be small and focused for a smaller organization.



An "environmental management system" or an EMS is defined by Section 10.1-1187.1 of the Code of Virginia as a cohesive, comprehensive set of documented policies and procedures adopted by a facility or person and used to establish environmental goals, to meet and maintain those goals, to evaluate environmental performance and to achieve measurable or noticeable improvements in environmental performance, through planning, documented management and operational practices, operational changes, self-assessments, and management review (the term includes but is not limited to systems developed in accordance with ISO 14001).

What are the incentives for members?

E2 members receive:

- ✓ Public recognition of performance from DEQ
- ✓ Peer-to-peer support network
- ✓ Positive press
- ✓ Reduced annual permit fees

In addition to those above, E3 and E4 members may receive:

- ✓ A single point of contact at DEQ
- ✓ Alternative compliance methods (ACM)
- ✓ Opportunity for recognition as an environmental leader

The mission of the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP) is to improve environmental performance across the Commonwealth by establishing meaningful collaborative relationships and encouraging voluntary environmental stewardship and innovation in both the regulated and non-regulated community.

Can a facility's participation in VEEP be terminated by DEQ?

Termination or removal from VEEP may occur for failure to document performance improvement, compliance status, or failure of the facility to meet its commitments to the program on a continuous basis.

What does VEEP have to do with me?

Whatever your position at DEQ, your support of VEEP is vital. You may be able to identify facilities that are appropriate VEEP members as either on-ramp facilities (E2) or high-performing facilities and forward those contacts to VEEP staff. Also, you may be asked to assist in compliance reviews for VEEP applications. Finally, you may have opportunities to promote VEEP in your day-to-day activities. For further information on how to support this program, please contact Sharon Baxter.



For more information:
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Visit www.deq.virginia.gov/veep

Lockheed Martin appreciates the support DEQ has provided to this valuable program and to our facility for encouraging us to make even further progress beyond compliance."

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