

2016 News Releases

EPA Announces National Enforcement Initiatives for Coming Years

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WASHINGTON – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today announced its seven National Enforcement Initiatives for fiscal years 2017-2019, which focus on national pollution challenges where EPA's enforcement efforts will protect public health. For the next cycle starting on October 1, 2016, EPA will retain four of its current National Enforcement Initiatives, add two new initiatives, and expand one to include a new area of focus. The fiscal year 2017-2019 National Enforcement Initiatives are:

1. Keeping Industrial Pollutants Out of the Nation's Waters (new initiative)
2. Reducing Risks of Accidental Releases at Industrial and Chemical Facilities (new initiative)
3. Cutting Hazardous Air Pollutants (expanded initiative)
4. Reducing Air Pollution from the Largest Sources
5. Ensuring Energy Extraction Activities Comply with Environmental Laws
6. Keeping Raw Sewage and Contaminated Stormwater Out of the Nation's Waters
7. Preventing Animal Waste from Contaminating Surface and Ground Water

EPA is expanding its initiative focused on reducing toxic air pollution by adding large storage tanks and hazardous waste facilities to its work to address public health threats.

National Enforcement Initiatives reinforce EPA's core enforcement work. One of EPA's top enforcement priorities is to protect safe drinking water, and three of its initiatives include a focus on keeping pollutants out of drinking water sources.

"National Enforcement Initiatives help us focus time and resources on national pollution problems that impact Americans locally," said Cynthia Giles, assistant administrator for enforcement and compliance assurance at EPA. "These initiatives were chosen so we can better protect communities, especially those overburdened by pollution, and were informed by extensive analysis and public input. We remain committed to a vigorous enforcement program that reduces pollution and protects public health."

EPA selects National Enforcement Initiatives every three years to focus resources on national environmental problems where there is significant non-compliance with laws, and where federal enforcement efforts can make a difference. The initiatives will cover three fiscal years, and focus on employing Next Generation Compliance strategies to enhance enforcement cases and build compliance. Next Generation Compliance is EPA's strategy to address today's pollution challenges through a modern approach to increase compliance, utilizing new tools while strengthening vigorous enforcement of environmental laws.


EPA's new work will address sources of pollution that pose direct public health and environmental threats to communities.


- **Keeping Industrial Pollutants Out of the Nation's Waters:** Certain facilities in industrial sectors like chemical and metal manufacturing, mining and food processing are responsible for nutrient and metal pollution in lakes, rivers and streams, and can degrade water quality and threaten drinking water sources. EPA's focus on facilities in these industrial sectors, driven by water pollution data, will build compliance with Clean Water Act discharge permits and cut illegal pollution discharges, which impact water quality.
- **Reducing Risks of Accidental Releases at Industrial and Chemical Facilities:** Thousands of facilities nationwide, many of which are in low income or minority communities, make, use and store extremely hazardous substances. Catastrophic accidents at these facilities—historically about 150 each year—result in fatalities and serious injuries, evacuations, and risk of harm to health and the environment. EPA will focus on reducing the risks of accidents through innovative accident prevention measures, and improving response capabilities.
- **Cutting Toxic Air Pollution (expanded initiative):** Leaks, flares, and excess emissions from refineries, chemical plants and other industries emit hazardous air pollutants that are known or suspected to cause cancer and birth defects, seriously impact the environment, and pose risks to local communities and facility employees. EPA will continue to implement this initiative, and expand it to address air toxics violations at facilities that generate, treat, store or dispose of hazardous waste.


EPA's current National Enforcement Initiative that focuses on reducing pollution from mineral processing operations will return to the base enforcement program level for hazardous waste beginning in fiscal year 2017. Recent settlements that address some high risk mineral processing facilities have helped set the stage to resolve future cases at other high risk facilities in this sector.

EPA has achieved significant progress under its National Enforcement Initiatives:

- More than 98 percent of cities with large combined sewer systems and more than 90 percent of cities with large sanitary sewer systems are under enforceable agreements or have permits that put them on a schedule to address untreated sewage discharges into America's waterways.
- 59 percent of individual power generating units at coal-fired power plants have installed the required pollution controls or are under a court order to do so.
- Since 2011, EPA has secured enforceable agreements to address violations at 539 facilities emitting toxic air pollution.
- Since 2011, EPA has concluded 217 enforcement actions at concentrated animal feeding operations for violations of the

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Clean Water Act, and 196 enforcement actions at natural gas extraction and production sites.

EPA's overall enforcement work has resulted in large cases that reduce pollution, level the playing field for responsible companies, and protect public health in communities across the country. Recent record settlements include putting billions of dollars to work restoring the Gulf and helping communities affected by the BP oil spill, and securing a \$100 million penalty from Hyundai-Kia, as well as forfeiture of emissions credits and more than \$50 million invested in compliance measures. For more information about EPA's enforcement results and statistics, visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/enforcement/enforcement-annual-results-fiscal-year-fy-2015>.

EPA took public comment on the proposed National Enforcement Initiatives for fiscal years 2017-2019, and EPA solicited input from a wide range of stakeholders, including state and local governments, industry and non-governmental groups, and considered their feedback and comments when finalizing the initiatives.

To read more about EPA National Enforcement Initiatives, visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/enforcement/national-enforcement-initiatives>.

For more information about EPA's Next Generation Compliance strategy, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/next-generation-compliance>.

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