

Introduction

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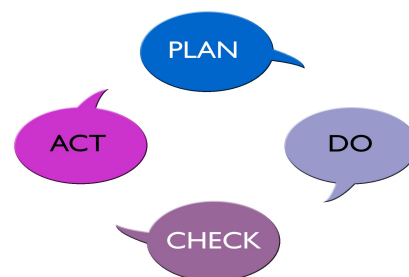
What is an EMS?

An EMS is a set of policies, management processes, training, and procedures that allows an organization to review, analyze, control and reduce the environmental impact of its operations and to operate with greater efficiency and control.

An EMS is built around the framework of “plan, do, check, act” that uses a continual improvement process to identify organizational goals, implement them, determine progress, and make improvements to ensure that environmental considerations, both regulated and unregulated, are fully integrated into the organization’s mission and operations. An EMS is also designed to help the organization accomplish this more efficiently and cost-effectively.

An EMS is built around key elements, including:

- Defining roles and responsibilities
- Identifying and prioritizing environmental impacts
- Setting measurable objectives and targets
- Verifying and establishing operational controls
- Monitoring and measuring activities and progress
- Aiming for continual improvement as part of a management review (feedback) cycle



To address the complex challenges faced by today’s wastewater utilities, a number of organizations have developed or are developing an EMS for their operations. The results of these efforts have been impressive. Utilities with EMSs are operating more efficiently, avoiding risk and improving the capacity of their workforce. Much of this information is captured in this Toolbox and more information is available including great case studies, for other utilities considering the use of EMS. For more information on EMS and the plan-do-check-act approach, visit: www.peercenter.net/whatisems.

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