

EMS: A Better Bottom Line for Local Government

Environmental Management Systems

What is an EMS?

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a “Best Practices” tool that enables local government officials to set goals with respect to managing their facilities’ environmental impacts and to establish planning, staffing, and operational procedures needed to achieve those goals. An EMS provides a systematic way to review and improve operations for better organizational performance. By incorporating environmental considerations into an organization's decision-making structure, an EMS introduces employees to more efficient business processes. This often leads to enhanced operational effectiveness and a better bottom line. Experience has proven that investment in an EMS can mean money saved, reduced insurance premiums, improved bond ratings, and greater regulatory flexibility, as well as improved confidence on the management of environmental issues.



"Our organization's achievement of independent standards of excellence through our EMS based on ISO 14001 has provided a level of confidence to credit rating agencies that the utility is being run as a business and as efficiently as possible. When we went to the market for a bond needed to rehabilitate decaying tunnels, this helped out utility receive a favorable credit rating"

John B. Cook
Assistant General Manager
Charleston, S.C. Commissioners
of Public Works



EMS Benefits

An EMS delivers big benefits – organizations that implement an EMS quickly discover that their investment pays off. Monetary and natural resource savings are two significant direct benefits of EMS adoption. These long-term savings produce a win-win situation for the organization, the public and regulatory officials.

PUBLIC ENTITY			
City of San Diego Refuse Disposal Division	Charleston Commissioners of Public Works	City of Albany, Oregon	Jefferson County, Alabama
BENEFITS over \$2 million	Improved Credit Ratings	Easier to raise rates	Millions of dollars saved
DESCRIPTION in heavy equipment and diesel rates by shutting off equipment during breaks and lunch periods	due to implementation of EMS for the entire utility	due to improved community confidence based on EMS	due to potential bond rating improvement

Avoiding Future Liabilities

An EMS provides future liability avoidance and promotes better working relationships with regulators. It also gives organizations a better understanding of their legal requirements and provides a consistent method for finding the root causes of non-compliance. Improved compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements can reduce penalties and remediation costs - potentially saving thousands. Organizations with EMSs no longer apply reactive quick fixes for violations, but seek to eliminate the causes of these violations and prevent future occurrences. Training, communication, monitoring, measuring and regular management review are the EMS tools used every day to make this possible.

Reduced Insurance Premiums & Improved Bond Ratings

EMSs help reduce environmental and workplace security risks. This systems process approach has created verifiable, credible environmental results that have led to better overall organizational performance. In turn, an EMS has the potential to significantly influence financial institutions as they assess risk.

Sample Costs

Based on data collected since 1997, the resources that public entities commit to EMS are primarily direct labor costs, with no additional employees or specialists needed on the workforce. Direct labor costs have averaged about 12 hours per employee per year to integrate EMS activities into their daily activities.

Average Resources Used* = **\$95,275** (over 2 years)

Average Labor Hours* = **3,074** (over 2 years)

**based on data collected from 23 public entities.*

Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District, Portland, OR

5 Maintenance Facilities ♦ \$89,241 ♦ 2,809 hours

City of Berkeley, CA

Solid Waste Management Division \$93,266 ♦ 3,813 hours

Jefferson County, AL

General Services Dept. & Fleet Management \$92,734 ♦ 3,877 hours



U.S. EPA

The Agency's EMS web page providing EMS information and resources.

Jim Horne
National Project Manager
202-564-0571

www.epa.gov/EMS



PEER Center

One-stop shop for public entity-focused EMS information and resources

www.peercenter.net



Global Environment & Technology Foundation

The Foundation's Web page for sustainable development initiatives.

Noeleen Tillman
Vice President
703-379-2713

www.getf.org

Local Government Viewpoints

"We are integrating and instituting environmental management systems based on strategic planning and continual improvement. This has increased our customers' understanding, support, and willingness to invest more community money into an aged and obsolete infrastructure"

Diane Taniguchi-Dennis, P.E.
Public Works Director
City of Albany, Oregon

"Pursuing an EMS has helped establish a framework for our organization to define its environmental commitment, to examine and manage the environmental impacts of our day-to-day operations, and to formalize how we do business in an environmentally sensitive manner"

Judith M. Mueller
Director of Public Works
Charlottesville, VA
Former President APWA



www.apwa.net
American Public Works
Association