

Site planning and management



Environment
Protection
Authority Victoria



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Guidance sheet

Undertaking site planning and management to eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to human health and the environment

Overview

The decisions you make as part of site planning and site management can prevent or reduce the risk of harm to human health and the environment posed by your site activities.

About site planning

Site planning is the design and process of planning for a new development or project. It should include assessing potential hazards, risks and controls that eliminate or reduce risk of harm to human health and the environment. You should undertake your site planning *before* you begin your activities. Planning your site activities gives you and your employees a framework in which to work.

To support the assessment of potential hazards, risks and controls, the manage your environmental risk webpage (<https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-business/how-to/manage-environmental-risk/risk-management-process>) provide information that will help you to comply with environmental protection laws.

About site management

Management refers to the ongoing oversight of site activities, infrastructure, personnel and community interactions. You should incorporate the process to identify hazards, risks and controls together with the maintenance of controls into any site management activity. For example, good site management could include keeping a daily record of the condition of controls or monitoring performance. It could also include maintenance of key plant and equipment, and ongoing hazard identification.

When to undertake site planning and management

You should undertake site planning *before* you start your activities, whether they are new or ongoing. When planning, you should also consider the timing of your activities over the lifecycle of your business. Risks may change as the business evolves.

Active management of your site is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of control measures and is an ongoing process.

Suitable for: any amenity issue such as odour, noise, sediment, erosion and dust.

Industries that would use this: all industries could benefit from undertaking site planning and management.

More information

See our website: [epa.vic.gov.au/for-business/how-to/manage-environmental-risk](https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-business/how-to/manage-environmental-risk)

Contact us:
1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC) or
contact@epa.vic.gov.au

The actions you take and the controls you decide to implement will support you to comply with your [general environmental duty](#) and other duties under the *Environment Protection Act 2017*.



Site planning and management: guidance sheet

What to consider for planning and ongoing management

Consider:	Examples:
Understanding your activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the site activities that may result in harm to human health and the environment and implement control measures to prevent or mitigate these impacts. Examples of what you may consider:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ identify people and sensitive environments (sensitive receivers) that could be affected by your activities○ avoid the generation of impacts; for example dust, odour and noise○ identify the most appropriate equipment and work practices for your activities○ choose alternative equipment or methods that generate less impact○ maintain equipment and vehicles according to manufacturers' instructions○ alternatives if impacts cannot be reduced through avoidance or reduction.• Understand the duration of your project and timeframes of when your activities will occur. This will help inform appropriate selection and implementation of controls (short-term versus long-term), and how these controls may need to be modified over time.• During site planning, or as soon as possible after, ensure you have identified effective control solutions and keep records of these processes once in operation.
Planning requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When planning your site, ensure it is in accordance with all state and local laws such as local planning laws and building regulations. You can find out more from your local council (https://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/home) or Victorian Building Authority (https://www.vba.vic.gov.au/).• EPA assesses planning proposals for potential impacts on human health and the environment. See planning guidance (https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-business/find-a-topic/planning-guidance) for further information.
Preventative maintenance program and EMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Putting a preventative maintenance program or environmental management systems program (EMS) in place provides a systematic and methodical approach to planning, implementing and reviewing your control measures.• As part of your preventative maintenance program or EMS, it is important to integrate ongoing monitoring and maintenance of your controls in your program. This will ensure they are effective and working as planned. For high risk activities, implement a contingency plan in the event the control measure fails.• You can carry out monitoring and maintenance of controls by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ conducting regular site inspections○ routine maintenance inspections○ consulting with staff○ recording incidents or near misses○ logging community complaints and the actions you took to resolve the issue.• Record all site and maintenance inspections.
Proximity to neighbours and sensitive receivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is important to manage your activities and operational timing if your site's neighbouring properties include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ private residences○ aged care facilities○ hospitals

Site planning and management: hazard control guidance sheet

- schools
- childcare
- kindergartens
- universities
- other areas where people congregate.

This includes activities such as receiving materials (including onsite storage and handling), production, construction and maintenance processes.

- For sites experiencing ongoing complaints, engagement activities with the local community such as community meetings can help inform and gauge the extent of dissatisfaction because of your site activities. You can also hold open public meetings to see whether there is a more widespread problem in surrounding areas. Facilitating an open forum for those impacted by your site activities enables the community to raise their concerns and provide input into solutions in a collaborative and transparent manner. Regular consultation with affected communities enables you to effectively manage impacts as they arise.

Complaints response system

- Implementing a complaints response system is critical to managing issues on your site. It ensures an effective response to complaints. Prompt responses to complaints are important in developing and maintaining good relationships with your surrounding community. Effective complaint investigation supports identifying parts of the operation or process where existing control procedures need improvement. It can also lead to the identification and implementation of new controls.
- You can use complaint records to build up a long-term picture of issues on your site and provide a measure of the cumulative impacts of repeated incidents.
- If a complaint is made about your business, refer to information such as:
 - How to respond to an odour incident or complaint (<https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-business/find-a-topic/odour/advice-for-businesses/incidents-or-complaints>).
 - How to respond to an erosion or sediment incident or complaint (<https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-business/find-a-topic/erosion-and-sediment/advice-for-businesses/incidents-or-complaints>).

Weather conditions

- Understand typical local wind direction around your site – this can inform the best way to set up your site to help minimise impacts on sensitive receivers.
- Understand the conditions of your site (for example is the site regularly wet, humid, dry or hot?)
- Consider adverse weather conditions (for example hot, dry and wet periods, high winds, heavy rainfall events and days with poor air quality). Be flexible and adjust your work plan or schedule as necessary.

Disclaimer

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