

State Seeks ESP Participants

Companies Can Benefit from Environmental Stewardship

Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) Assistant Commissioner Daniel Murray answers questions about Indiana's new Environmental Stewardship Program (ESP).

Q: What is the Environmental Stewardship Program?

A: ESP is an environmental performance leadership program intended to encourage Indiana businesses to proactively manage their environmental responsibilities, providing recognition and regulatory flexibility in exchange for this commitment. The program is based on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Environmental Performance Track (NEPT) program.

Q: What are the eligibility requirements for joining ESP?

A: Eligible entities must have a satisfactory compliance record, an effective environmental management system (EMS) and a commitment to identify and implement at least one environmentally beneficial project each year of membership.

Q: What does IDEM mean by the ESP slogan "Better Environment, Better Business?"

A: Many things that manufacturers are doing right now to improve their businesses are good for both their bottom line and the environment. Lean manufacturing, Kaizen, 5S and other such initiatives identify areas in which waste can be reduced, operational efficiency can be improved and other projects identified. We strongly believe that the continuous improvement management philosophy and activities required in ESP (EMS and the improvement projects) will lead to improvements in both Indiana's environment and the economic viability of businesses.

Q: What types of environmentally beneficial projects will be considered?

A: Those that result in decreased impact to the environment such as reductions in air emissions, water discharges, waste generation or disposal, and energy consumption. Many can be identified through existing lean manufacturing activities intended to reduce waste and increase operational efficiency.

Q: What types of incentives will be offered to members?

A: We've worked hard to identify incentives that are intended to provide real business value. Regulatory flexible incentives include faster, more flexible permits, streamlined permit renewals, reduced monitoring, recordkeeping and reporting frequency where feasible, a single point of contact at the agency and low priority for routine inspections. Recognition incentives include IDEM promotion through press releases and other outlets, use of the ESP logo by members, networking opportunities with the agency and other program members, and annual meetings with IDEM's commissioner to discuss the program and other items.

Q: How resource intensive do you expect ESP to be for members?

A: We knew we couldn't simply build a program that would mean

managers have to do more with less. The regulatory flexibility incentives will provide an opportunity to shift resources from certain affirmative compliance responsibilities to those activities that produce better environmental results, effectively managing the facility's environmental management system and implementing environmentally beneficial projects.



Daniel Murray

Q: How does ESP differ from EPA's NEPT program?

A: The programs are quite similar, but with subtle differences. We're promoting membership in both programs through completion of the NEPT application. Entities become eligible for ESP sooner than NEPT. We want ESP to be the reason organizations decide that now is the time to be more proactive in managing their environmental responsibilities. Once an organization commits to being proactive, through implementing an EMS and identifying an improvement project, they are eligible to join ESP. For organizations implementing an EMS to join ESP, they can become eligible for NEPT in 18 to 24 months.

Q: Are the EMS requirements in ESP the same as ISO 14001, and are there EMS development assistance activities planned to assist Indiana entities that do not have an EMS in place today?

A: While an ISO 14001 EMS will meet the ESP requirements, the EMS requirements in ESP differ from ISO 14001 in a few ways. In ESP, the EMS is focused on communicating compliance responsibilities to affected employees and integrating environmental considerations into everyday business planning and decision-making activities. The document control burden of ISO 14001 is also not a part of the ESP EMS requirements. An EPA grant will be used to assist Indiana entities in developing an EMS with the intent of joining ESP. Both EMS development workshops and on-site assistance will soon be available.

Q: When and how often will IDEM accept applications for membership in ESP?

A: The ESP application period is aligned with EPA's NEPT membership period, occurring twice annually from September 1 to October 31 and March 1 to April 30.

Q: How can I learn more about ESP?

A: You can contact IDEM's Office of Pollution Prevention and Technical Assistance (OPPTA) at (800) 988-7901 or go to www.in.gov/idem/prevention/esp/index.html

INFORMATION LINK

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