

You have tools to fight polluters...

Citizens have many tools in the fight against polluters. Some of these tools come in the form of complaints and emergency numbers. Both general complaints and verified complaints can be used effectively when pursuing a environmental violator.

Ohio EPA's emergency HOTLINE

Accidental or unauthorized spills, releases, emissions, or intentional dumping of contaminants into the air, land, or water can be reported to Ohio EPA's 24-hour emergency response hotline toll-free at **(800) 282-9378**. Please make sure you give as much detail as possible such as:

- time observed
- material released
- probable source
- weather conditions
- personnel on the scene
- location
- contaminant released
- any movement of contaminant (is it moving down stream? is it going into a stream?, etc.)

General complaint

The Ohio EPA has toll-free hotlines operated by each district to offer advice and information and to assist anyone who would like to report a violation of environmental laws.

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| • Central District Office | 800-686-2330 |
| • Northeast District Office | 800-686-6330 |
| • Northwest District Office | 800-686-6930 |
| • Southeast District Office | 800-686-7330 |
| • Southwest District Office | 800-686-8930 |

If you do not know what district you are in, visit www.epa.state.oh.us/new/directions.html or call the Central Office at 614-644-2001.

You can also contact the Ohio EPA's Public Interest Center at 614-644-2160 or e-mail info-request@www.epa.state.oh.us to request information

If you have further questions, please contact:
Keith Dimoff, Deputy Director, at keith@theoec.org or 614-487-7506, or David R. Celebrezze, Director of Air and Water Special Programs, at david@theoec.org or 614-487-7506.

Verified Complaint

If the general complaint fails to gain attention, or you feel the situation calls for a more structured complaint, a verified complaint can be filed. A verified complaint is a more formal avenue of logging a complaint. Once a verified complaint is sent, it requires the Ohio EPA to investigate the complaint and report to you the results. Verified complaints have a formal process and steps that must be followed.

Verified Complaints must:

- Claim that the individual has been or will be directly aggrieved or adversely affected by the alleged violation. If the private citizen is directly affected they can file a verified complaint; if they are not directly affected, they cannot. Officers of the government or elected officials that represent people can file a verified complaint on behalf of the affected individual(s)
- Identify a violation of any law, rule, standard, order, license, permit, variance, or plan approval
- Be in writing and labeled "VERIFIED COMPLAINT"
- Be verified by the affidavit of the complainant, or her/his agent/attorney
- Be notarized before submission to the Ohio EPA

Violations must relate to one of the following:

- water pollution
- air pollution
- solid or hazardous waste
- infectious waste
- construction or demolition debris
- public water supply

What will happen after the verified complaint is submitted?

Once the complaint is received, an investigation of the allegations will be conducted. If the director determines a violation is evident, the director may issue an order to the violator to correct the problem or request the Attorney General's office to begin legal proceedings. To read the Ohio law regarding formal complaints, please see Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Section 3745.08. **Know your EPA staff person.** Working and building a relationship with the Ohio EPA staff person assigned to your particular area will ensure knowledge of the process which can best serve the environment.

