

WATER AIR LAND

Environmental Complaints and Local Services Division Environmental Complaints Program

As one of DEQ's highest priorities and the centerpiece of the Department's mission, the Environmental Complaints Program is a customer oriented program designed to address citizens' environmental complaints.

The program's two main goals are:

- (1) to provide rapid response to each environmental complaint; and
- (2) to bring about regulatory compliance through a consistent and structured process.

The Environmental Complaints Program is unlike any other complaint program in the nation in that specific timelines for communication with the complainant are set in the Department's regulations. The program has a uniform investigation process, a central repository for all complaints and direct involvement with each citizen who lodges a complaint.

Some of the elements of the Environmental Complaints Program are

- A toll-free hotline for Oklahomans to report environmental complaints. The hotline is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The number is 800/522-0206.
- No more than two working days will elapse between receipt of the complaint and a response to the citizen from the Investigator.
- Within seven days, correspondence from the Investigator to the citizen lodging the complaint will be sent.
- If resolution of the complaint is long-term, the citizen will be kept informed during the entire process.
- Complaints will be vigorously pursued to resolution or closure within 90 days.
- Few property owners are not financially able to make corrections to their own on-site disposal systems. ECLS established a grant program whereby approved owners can obtain needed funds.

- When compliance is reached, the citizen will receive written notification.
- After the final notification, a citizen will receive a customer performance survey.
- Citizens are provided access to an alternative dispute resolution system, more commonly known as mediation, which is voluntary and confidential.

Each year DEQ receives an average of 6,200 complaints within its jurisdiction. Since December 1996 all complaints have either been resolved or were under an enforcement action from the agency within 90 days.

Through the implementation of two days personal contact, keeping the citizen informed, setting a goal to resolve complaints within 90 days and providing technical assistance to the responsible party, the ECP has been and continues to be diligent in its pursuit to view the public as the customer. We strive daily to meet the Department's charge of providing outstanding service to the public.

