

## More tips...

- **GA EPD** is different from **US EPA**. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) is a **federal agency**. It **develops and enforces regulations that carry out environmental laws enacted by Congress**.
  - US EPA gives GA EPD the guidelines.
  - GA EPD takes the US EPA guidelines and, by working with stakeholders, creates state rules; these rules are then applied on a state level.
  - GA EPD can also work with local communities to identify potential local control measures.
- **GA EPD's authority is limited by law**. Many issues, such as vehicle traffic, noise and site suitability are local ordinance issues and are not under EPD's authority.
- **EPD encourages you to learn more about the rule-making and permitting process**. Keep updated on air quality issues by visiting the Air Protection Branch's website at: <http://www.georgiaair.org>



*We are here to serve.*

***By working together, through regulations and voluntary measures, we can improve Georgia's air quality, making it healthier for everyone.***

***Citizens, environmental groups, business, industry and government all have a role to play.***

***After all, we all breathe the same air.***

## Understanding and Working with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division



### GA EPD Air Protection Branch

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Suite 120  
Atlanta, GA 30354

Phone: 404-363-7000  
Web: [www.georgiaair.org](http://www.georgiaair.org)

### GA EPD Air Protection Branch

#### EPD's Mission:

We help provide Georgia's citizens with clean air, clean water, healthy lives and productive land by assuring compliance with environmental laws and by assisting others to do their part for a better environment.



## What is Georgia EPD?

[gaepd.org/](http://gaepd.org/)

EPD is a division within the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR) [www.gadnr.org](http://www.gadnr.org). Other divisions within GA DNR are:

- Coastal Resources Division
- Historic Preservation Division
- Pollution Prevention Assistance Division
- State Parks and Historic Sites Division
- Wildlife Resources Division
- Program Support Division

**EPD protects Georgia's air, land and water resources using rules passed through the authority of state and federal environmental legislation. These laws and rules regulate public and private facilities in the areas of air quality, water quality, hazardous waste, water supply, solid waste, surface mining, underground storage tanks, and others.**

**EPD is divided into five branches, each responsible for distinct environmental issues or coordination:**

- Air Protection Branch - 404-363-7000
- Land Protection Branch - 404-362-2537
- Watershed Protection Branch - 404-675-6232
- Hazardous Waste Management Branch - 404-656-7802
- Program Coordination Branch - 404-463-7600

How does the Air Protection Branch (APB) fit in?  
[www.georgiaair.org](http://www.georgiaair.org)

**The APB is the part of EPD that is responsible for protecting Georgia's air quality through the regulation of emissions from mobile, area and stationary sources. The Branch also monitors levels of air pollutants throughout the State.**

The APB has a Public Affairs Unit (404-363-7028) and six programs:

- Ambient Monitoring - 404/363-7006
- Stationary Source Permitting - 404/363-7051
- Stationary Source Compliance - 404/363-7018
- Industrial Source Monitoring - 404/363-7053
- Mobile and Area Sources – 404/363-7028
- Planning and Support - 404/363-7000

## Air Quality (AQ) Permits

*What is an AQ Permit?*

*The Stationary Source Permitting Program of the APB issues air quality permits for industrial sources, incinerators, and other stationary sources of air pollution. Before a source can operate or make changes to its operation, it must have an appropriate air quality permit.*

*How is the public notified of Permit applications?*

A weekly **Public Advisory (PA)** of industries that have applied for permits that week is distributed via email and postal service to interested parties in the applicable counties. This includes public officials and newspapers as well as any individual or group who requests them. (You may sign up to receive PAs at <http://www.georgiaair.org/airpermit/listservers.htm>.) The advisory provides a **30-day comment period** in which one can provide comments in writing to EPD regarding the permit application. Generally a permit cannot be issued until the comments are addressed by EPD. If, within this 30-day period, a hearing is requested, EPD schedules a hearing. A Q&A Session or hearing may also be scheduled even if it is not requested by the public. Official comments, relative to air quality issues and the permit application, received before and during the hearing become part of the permit application file and are addressed in the approval or denial of the permit.

*What is the AQ Permit Process?*

- The applicant sends an AQ Permit application to the APB, where it is date-stamped, assigned an application number and sent to the appropriate unit.
- The Unit Manager assigns the application to an engineer.
- The engineer conducts a "completeness" review and decides if there are issues that require input from other Programs or Branches. If the completeness review finds information missing from the application, the engineer requests more information from the applicant.
- The APB's goal is to prepare the permit within 90 days of receipt of a complete application.
- If a citizen requests a public hearing during the 30-day Public Advisory Period, EPD schedules a hearing. The application can not be approved or denied until after the hearing has been held. Sometimes EPD will schedule a "Q&A Session" prior to a hearing to answer questions about the permit.
- The completed application is then reviewed and a recommendation to approve or deny is made by the following managers: the Unit Manager, the Permitting Program Manager and finally the Air Branch Chief.
- The permit package is then sent to EPD's Director, who is empowered by state laws to sign permits, issue permit denials, and administer other permitting actions.

## What is a Public Hearing?

- **An Air Quality Public Hearing** is a formal proceeding designed to incorporate public comments into the air permit application or rule-making review. EPD schedules a Public Hearing as needed or in response to a request during the 30-day public advisory period. If requested, a hearing must be conducted before the permit can be issued. Citizens may sign up to make official comments during the hearing regarding air quality issues involved in the proposed permit application. Comments may also be submitted in writing. These comments then become part of the air permit application file. The Public Hearing is a formal process and EPD officials cannot answer questions during the hearing. Upon the closing of the hearing, the comment period is officially closed.

*Because Public Hearings are focused on receiving comments rather than entertaining questions, the APB often hosts an Air Quality "Question and Answer (Q&A) Session" prior to the Public Hearing to encourage dialogue and discussion regarding a particular facility or issue.*

How is a "Q&A Session" different from a "Public Hearing?"

**An Air Quality Question & Answer (Q&A) Session** is designed to help citizens understand specifics of an air quality permit application or a proposed air quality rule as well as to encourage dialogue. It is not a required meeting under state and federal law. The APB invites the permit applicant to participate in this meeting, but they are not required to do so. This meeting begins with short presentations by an APB representative and the permit applicant representative, but the majority of the meeting is dedicated to answering citizens' questions and listening to concerns.