

Pollution Prevention Act Framework

EPA's framework for Pollution Prevention is divided into the following five focus areas.

1. [A Guiding Social Principle](#)
2. [Sustainable Business Practices](#)
3. [Government Actions](#)
4. [Cleaner Technologies and Processes](#)
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A Guiding Social Principle

United States environmental policy is based upon the environmental management hierarchy, which directs us to prevent pollution in the first place, whenever feasible. Educating industry and the general public to the virtues of prevention is necessary to change from a culture that tolerates pollution to a sustainable one which increasingly eliminates pollution at the source. EPA's overall objective is to promote source reduction as the core environmental ethic of society. More specific objectives include the following:

- Foster prevention awareness across society, but especially among our children.
- Engage the environmental, environmental justice, labor, consumer, and other social sectors as partners in prevention.
- Promote P2 oriented community college and university instruction, especially for technicians, engineers, scientists and business students who will be primary prevention stewards.
- Partner with the public health community to demonstrate that "pollution prevention is disease prevention."
- Champion prevention as the environmental principle of first choice in the international community.

Sustainable Business Practices

Although American industry and business is responsible for much of the nation's pollution, these same institutions are also critical to prevent pollution in the future. Industry, through eco-efficiency, sustainable development and other movements, should play a leadership role in pollution source reduction. EPA's overall objective is to promote pollution

prevention approaches and techniques as an essential part of how businesses operate. More specific objectives include the following:

- Increase partnerships with industry to advance eco-efficiency and other approaches that shift businesses "beyond compliance" and increase corporate environmental stewardship and private sector P2 infrastructure.
- Assist businesses to understand the full spectrum of their environmental costs, and to integrate environmental factors into their corporate cost and materials accounting and decision-making processes.
- Identify approaches and incentives to engage the larger financial sector (investment community, bankers, insurance underwriters, mutual fund managers, etc.) to support prevention.
- Support government small business assistance programs, who provide environmental information in a business context, to promote both source reduction and regulatory compliance.
- Utilize the rapid growth of corporate environmental management systems to promote prevention.

Government Actions

This priority area will continue to be the EPA's primary focus of pollution prevention activity. EPA's overall objective is to integrate P2 into its regulatory and other mainstream programs, so it truly becomes the Agency's "principle of first choice" in all its endeavors. More specific objectives include the following:

- Incorporate multi-media, prevention approaches or alternatives into key EPA rules, permitting, and compliance assistance activities, and through regulatory enforcement efforts such as supplemental environmental projects.
- Target the top industrial polluters, and the worst pollutants, for special federal, state, tribal actions and private sector initiatives to promote pollution prevention.
- Promote integration of P2 approaches in state regulatory programs, both through traditional media program state grants, and through the new Performance Partnership Agreements and Grants under the National Environmental Performance Partnership System (NEPPS) with

the states.

- Improve the quality and quantity of P2 information and assistance available to state and tribal P2 Programs.
- Promote P2 in new Agency programs, especially those undertaken to "reinvent" EPA activities or advance key Administrative initiatives, such as those to protect children's health, improve urban environmental quality, and foster environmental justice.

Cleaner Technologies and Processes

Industry can hardly abandon standard chemical use and production processes without preferable and reliable options, and EPA, along with other agencies of the Federal government, has helped to identify some innovative and successful alternatives. EPA's overall objective is to help companies continuously identify and apply cleaner technologies and practices. More specific objectives include the following:

- Help industry make more informed environmental decisions about the use of alternative chemicals, processes, and technologies to prevent pollution.
- Foster chemical methods that reduce or eliminate the use or generation of toxic substance during the design, manufacture and use of chemical products and processes.
- Identify and reduce risks to human health and the environment from existing and future exposure to priority persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals (PBTs) in particular.
- Develop new P2 tools which increase the understanding and use of important P2 concepts, such as life-cycle assessment.
- Bring the influence of compliance and regulatory enforcement to bear on new prevention technology development and application.
- Increase collaboration with other federal agencies, such as the Departments of Energy, Commerce, and Defense, in the development and dissemination of P2 technology.
- Promote P2 assessment methodologies that enable firms to make more informed and independent decisions about hazardous chemical use when there is very limited data on risk.

Safe Products

Although toxic emissions are decreasing, the creation and use of toxics in American society is on the rise -- and the source of these increased toxics is often the products we use. Consumers have a right to know what chemicals are in the products and services they purchase, and the hazards associated with those chemicals. EPA's overall objective is to ensure safe consumer products and services. More specific objectives include the following:

- Make information about hazardous chemicals more widely available to the public.
- Foster P2, empower consumer choice, and improve consumer understanding of safe use, environmental, and health information on household consumer product labels.
- Provide Federal leadership through environmentally preferable procurement and other administrative processes, with EPA "leading by example."
- Establish a foundation of Federal policy in defining environmentally preferable products for our society, with a particular emphasis on protecting children's health.