

# CENTER FOR COALFIELD JUSTICE

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 $www.coalfield justice.com {\ \bullet\ } info@coalfield justice.org$ 

## HOW TO: Report an Environmental Emergency/File an Environmental Complaint with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP")

DISCLOSER: This guide is not, and is not a substitute for, legal advice nor a solicitation to provide legal advice. In some instances, a community member may want to contact their attorney for further counsel.

- 1. If you experienced or witnessed an <u>environmental emergency</u>, call the Southwest Regional Office at 412-442-4000. Someone should be available to take your call 24 hours a day.
  - a. "An <u>environmental emergency</u> is a situation requiring an immediate response. This may include discoloration of a waterway, a fish kill, spilled material, or other situation threatening public health and safety or the environment in some way that must be addressed in real time."
  - b. Describe to the service representative what the emergency is and where it is located.
    - i. It might help to think about the five senses when providing a description. Ex. What do you see, hear, or smell?
  - c. Request a complaint number from the service representative to have for reference.
  - d. DEP will usually dispatch a highly trained, experienced emergency first responder who is a member of the Environmental Emergency Response Team.
- 2. If you are reporting an **environmental complaint**, you can call or file a complaint online:
  - a. Call <u>866-255-5158</u>, then <u>press 5</u> to speak with a service representative from the Southwest Regional Office.
    - i. A service representative should answer your call, but you can also file a complaint via voicemail if the agent is unable to answer at that time.
      - 1. Speaking with a service agent
        - a. The agent will gather your contact information and information on the specifics of your complaint.
           If you would like to remain anonymous, you can. Know that DEP will not be able to follow up with you regarding the complaint if you remain anonymous.
      - 2. Leaving a voicemail:
        - a. provide your name, phone number and/or email address to reach you.
          - i. You do not have to provide this information if you would like to stay anonymous, but know that DEP will not be able to follow up. However, all complaints are kept confidential.

- b. Identify the location of the problem as best you can: such as the city, county, township, name of road or stream or river, etc. If you are unsure of the location, you may be able to identify it using a mobile app, such as Google or Apple Maps.
- c. Describe the problem in a detailed but brief fashion remember you only have three minutes when leaving a voicemail.
  - i. It might help to think about the five senses when providing a description. Ex. What do you see, hear, or smell?
- b. File a complaint online
  - i. Navigate to the Department of Environmental Protection Website.
    - 1. Dep.pa.gov
    - 2. Click on "Environmental Complaints"

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3. Click on the drop-down arrow to expand the "To report an environmental complaint . . ." text box

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		DEP > About DEP > Report an Incident > Environmer	ntal Complaints					
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#### 4. Click on "Submit a complaint online"

Department of En Protection	vironmental	About DEP	Residents	Businesses	Public Participation	Data and Tools	Q
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	To report an environmental complaint to	DEP: Submit	<u>a complaint</u>	online or cal	II 866-255-5158 ^		
	Anyone can report an environmental complaint. All to any complaint.	reports are conf	ïdential. DEP n	esponds promp	tly and professionally		
	Online complaints are reviewed during business	hours. Monday	through Frida	y, 8:00 am – 4:0	0 pm.		
	Submit a complaint online What happens when you submit the online comp	plaint form:					
	<ol> <li>The form asks for your name and a phone numbe email address, but to make an anonymous comp remain anonymous while still providing DEP with</li> </ol>	laint, sign up for	a free e-mail a	-			
	<ol> <li>It asks you to identify the location of the problem stream or river, etc. If you are unsure of the locatii mapping application, such as Google or Apple Mi detailed information where possible.</li> </ol>	on you may be a	ble to identify	your location us	ing a mobile device		
	<ol> <li>You will get an email confirming that your compl receive a follow-up email or phone call.</li> </ol>	aint was receive	d. When the in	vestigation is co	ompleted, you will		
	What happens when you call?						

#### 5. Put in your contact information

- a. NOTE: A complaint submitted to the DEP may be submitted anonymously, so you do not have to provide this information.
- However, an email address is required to submit a complaint electronically. If you wish to remain anonymous, you may use <u>complaints@centerforcoalfieldjustice.org</u> to submit your complaint.



**Environmental Complaint Form** 

To better assist DEP in the investigation of your complaint, please provide your name and contact information should further information be necessary. Please note, your information is considered confidential and will not be shared with any party outside DEP Note: Fields marked with an asterisk \* are required

Name	State	Home Telephone	
Jane Doe	PA ~		
Street Address		Work Telephone	
123 A Street			
City		Cell phone	
Washington	7	(000)000-0000	
Zip	_	E-mail Address *	
15301	7	example@example.com	
	_	Contact me via email *	
Complaint Information			
* Please use the drop-down menu to select a Count	ty from the list *		
	•		

- 6. Provide the complaint information
  - a. Use the dropdown menu to select the county where the complaint occurred

* Please use the drop-down menu to select a County from the list *   County of problem *   Do you know who is responsible?*   * Yes   Name   Problem   @ (000 000-0000   Address   Size   City
Do you know who is responsible?*     Yes     Pesponsible Party     Image: Contract me via email* Orgs Oxoco     Address      Problem Description   Please be as specific as possible and include stream names, road names and other information that you think would be here in the problem Description   Problem Description   Problem Description   Description   Problem Description   Complaint occurred   Contact me via email* Orgs No   Contact me via email* Orgs No   Contact me via email* Orgs No   Do you know who is responsible?*
Yes No          Responsible Party         Name       Phone         000000-0000         Address         state         city       Zip         city       Zip         city       Diagonal State         order       Problem Description - Please be as specific as possible and include stream names, road names and other information that you think would be hereinform         Problem Description       Problem Description         Problem Description       Complaint occurred         Complaint Information       *Please use the drop-down menu to select a County from the list *         County of problem *       Location of problem * Township/Borough/City *         Washington       Ceren Hills Borough         Do you know who is responsible?*
Problem Description - Please be as specific as possible and include stream names, road names and other information that you think would be for the municipality of problem Description b. Use the next dropdown menu to select the municipality of complaint occurred Complaint Information *Please use the drop-down menu to select a County from the list * County of problem * Location of problem - Township/Borough/City * Do you know who is responsible? *
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County of problem *     Location of problem - Township/Borough/City *       Washington     Green Hills Borough       Do you know who is responsible? *
Washington Green Hills Borough C
Do you know who is responsible? *
Responsible Party
Name Phone
Name Phone (000) 000-0000
Address State
Address State
City Zip
City Zip

\*continues on next page\*

c. If you know the responsible party, select yes and provide as much information as you can

	enu to select a County from the list *		
County of problem * Washington		ion of problem - Township/Borough/City *	~
washington		This boodgi	
Do you know who is responsible?	*		
Yes 🔿 No		Try to F Out As Mu	
Responsible Party		As You C	an
Name	Phone		
ABC Production Company	(000) 000-0000		
Address	State		
	PA		
City	Zip	_	
Washington	15301		
ulden Description Place be	ee op office of providing and include stream of	names and other information tha	t you think would be helpful
-			

### d. If you do not know the responsible party, select no

County of problem	1*	Location of problem - Township/Borough/City *
Washington		✓ Green Hills Borough ✓
Responsible Pa	rty  Phone (000) 000-0000  State  Zip	

\*continues on next page\*

- 7. Provide the problem description
  - a. In the "Problem Description" box, describe the complaint. Where its located, what it is, etc.
    - i. It might help to think about the five senses when providing a description. Ex. What do you see, hear, or smell?

Name	Phone	
ABC Production Company	(000) 000-0000	
Address	State	
	PA ~	
City	Zip	
Washington	15301	
olem Description - Please be	e as specific as possible and include stream names, road names and other inform	nation that you think would be helpful
saw		
saw heard smelled Directions		TIP!

- b. In the "Directions" box, describe how to get to the location where the complaint occurred.
  - It may be helpful to use Google Maps or Apple Maps to get directions from the DEP Southwest Regional Office's Address to the location of the complaint.
    - The Southwest Regional Office's address is: 400 Waterfront Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

	Problem Description
	I saw I heard I smelled
1	
	Directions
-	How to get to the location where the complaint occurred

#### 8. Submit the complaint

Problem Description
I saw I haard I smelled
Directions
How to get to the location where the complaint occurred

- 9. Receive email confirmation
  - a. Check the email you provided in the contact information portion of the complaint, you should receive a confirmation message that your complaint has been filed.
  - b. If you used the <u>complaints@centerforcoalfieldjustice.org</u> email address to remain anonymous, please give the Center for Coalfield Justice a call at 724-229-3550 so we can forward your email confirmation to you.
- 10. Appeal of Final Determination
  - a. After your complaint is submitted, DEP will conduct an investigation.
  - b. When the investigation is complete, DEP will issue a Final Determination.
    - i. NOTE: Not all Final Determinations are shared with the person who made the initial complaint; however, you may request it from DEP.
    - ii. If the incident occurred on your property, DEP will share the Final Determination with you
  - c. If you do not agree with the results of the Final Determination, YOU HAVE 30 DAYS FROM THE DATE ON THE DETERMINATION TO APPEAL to the PA Environmental Hearing Board.