



CENTER FOR COALFIELD JUSTICE

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A CONDENSED GUIDE TO FILING A COMPLAINT WITH THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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 **environmental emergency**, a situation requiring an immediate response, call the Southwest Regional Office at 412-442-4000. Someone should be available to take your call 24 hours a day.
2. If you are reporting an **environmental complaint**, you can call or file a complaint online:
 - a. **Call 866-255-5158**, then **press 5** to speak with a service representative from the Southwest Regional Office.
 - b. **Filing Online**
 - i. Navigate to pa.gov/agencies/dep.html
 - ii. Click on “Submit an incident or complaint” on the home screen.
 - iii. Click on “Submit an Environmental Complaint online.” You will be taken to the complaint form.
 - iv. Fill out as much of the form as you can. An email address is required.
 - v. Submit the form
3. **Best Practices**
 - a. Provide your name, phone number and/or email address to reach you.
 - i. You do not have to provide this information if you want to stay anonymous but know that DEP will not be able to follow up. However, all complaints are kept confidential.
 - ii. You must provide an email if you file a complaint online. If you want to remain anonymous, you can use complaints@centerforcoalfieldjustice.org, but please give us a call so we can forward you your confirmation email.
 - b. **If you answer yes to the question regarding health impacts, a Pennsylvania Department of Health representative may contact you for a 20 Minute Health Survey.**
 - c. Identify the location of the problem as best you can, such as the city, county, township, name of road, 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.
 - d. Describe the problem in a detailed but brief fashion. It might help to think about the five senses when providing a description. Ex. What do you see, hear, or smell?
 - e. After an initial complaint, DEP will begin an investigation. After DEP issues a final determination, you have **30 days from the date on the determination** to appeal with the PA Environmental Hearing Board. DEP will not always send the Final Determination to the initial complainant unless the incident occurred on their property.

JUSTICE FOR COALFIELD COMMUNITIES