



Fostering Environmental Leadership in the Public Sector: Third Environmental Management System Initiative for Public Entities

Background

Since August 1997, 23 local government entities from around the U.S. have benefited - both environmentally and economically - from Environmental Management System (EMS) implementation through participation in two EMS Initiatives for Local Governments. Both initiatives helped to demonstrate the significant benefits of EMS in the public sector and establish a solid foundation from which to further promote EMS adoption for public agencies. The initiatives were made possible through a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the Global Environment & Technology Foundation (GETF).

In January 2003, U.S. EPA and GETF began the third EMS Initiative for Public Entities. Nine participants, chosen from a large pool of outstanding applicants, will receive EMS training and technical assistance over the two-year implementation period. As has been the case with other public agencies, U.S. EPA and GETF expect these participants to experience a wide range of benefits from EMS implementation including an improved ability to meet compliance requirements, increased environmental awareness, reduced costs and increased efficiency, and greater competency and involvement throughout their organizations.

3rd Initiative Participants: January 2003 – December 2005

Each participant below selected a specific facility or unit (“fenceline”) within their respective organization in which to implement the EMS. The project structure includes four in-depth workshops, and participants remain closely linked through the use of a customized Virtual Private Office. In addition, GETF provides on-site technical assistance and guidance, and quarterly progress reports will track process decisions, benefits and hurdles, costs, and staff commitment.

“We hope to establish a unique EMS that combines both the public operation of the wastewater facility with the private operation of the biosolids facility and can serve as a model for the local governments and industries that we serve.” - Kent County Public Works

Public Entity	Fenceline
Clark County, WA	Equipment Services Department and Fleet/Parts Acquisition
City of Kansas City, MO	Household Hazardous Waste Facility
City of Charlottesville, VA	Department of Public Works – Division of Parks, Grounds, and Golf
Kent County, DE	Wastewater Treatment Facilities
Metro Waste Authority – Des Moines, IA	Landfill and Regional Collection Center Household Hazardous Waste
Oakland County Drain Commissioner’s Office – Waterford, MI	Wastewater Treatment Plant – Engineering and Construction
Orange County Convention Center – Orlando, FL	Environmental Purchasing and Waste Management
Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority – Charlottesville, VA	Wastewater Treatment Plant Complex
Sacramento Municipal Utility District, CA	Energy Supply Business Unit



The EMS Initiative’s Project is part of a larger program for local governments called the National Public Entity EMS Resource Center (“PEER Center”). As an extension of the PEER Center, eight Local Resource Centers (LRCs) provide local communities with technical expertise, field-tested tools, and support for EMS implementation. Similar to GETF, these LRCs, located around the country, promote EMS competence and encourage sharing and mentoring between public sector organizations. Two LRCs are also providing support to 3rd Initiative participants located in their respective regions.

The PEER Center originally started as a virtual clearinghouse of EMS information and guidance materials with a mission to leverage and extend mentoring and information sharing and further promote the use of EMSs in government entities. The PEER Center has established a network, including current and past Initiative participants, of avid supporters, spokespersons, and mentors for EMS as an accepted tool among public entities. For more information on the PEER Center and the LRC program, please visit www.peercenter.net.

Past Participants Report Significant EMS Benefits

Environmental Compliance and Performance: *"With regard to environmental compliance, we have a better understanding of our legal requirements. We have better-trained employees whose competence in their work areas is critical to the environment. We expect that our EMS will increase our ability to stay in compliance."*

Resource Conservation: *"With an annual operating budget of almost \$18.7 million, the Division expects an on-going annual cost savings of approximately \$868,000 from the successful implementation of the EMS. These achievements have resulted mainly from increased employee awareness, empowerment, and enthusiasm which has continued to prompt many employee-initiated operational changes."*

Water Conservation: *"In our efforts to conserve potable water use in our operations, we realized we have 1 million gallons of rainwater available in our sedimentation basin per large storm event. By using this water for dust control and soil compaction we estimate conserving about 800,000 gallons of potable water and \$1,500 in water fees on an annual basis."*

Efficient Regulatory Tracking: *"Implementing an EMS enables us to consciously identify all our regulatory requirements and formally designate responsibility for compliance and updates. We always felt we had a handle on this, but our procedure to identify our legal requirements now relieves worries that we might have missed something."*

Improved Bond Rating: *"With EMS we created a workplace that was less likely to generate injuries or serious environmental accidents. Less risk means greater opportunity for return on investment. We're told the potential impact of our EMS, taken with other factors, is a 1/16th to 1/8th of a point improvement, which could mean millions of dollars of taxpayer money saved each time we borrow money for capital projects."*

Operational Efficiency: *"Our organization set an objective and target related to resource conservation which included our diesel, electricity, natural gas, and water usage at 10% savings for one year. Each facility was responsible for finding creative ways to achieve these savings. After changing procedures, communicating the goals and monitoring the results, the total operational savings for one year resulted in monetary savings of approximately \$63,631."*

Reduced Insurance Premiums: *"We expect to see a 20% reduction in our future insurance premiums as a result of EMS documentation and operational controls."*

Recycling: *"Building on the momentum generated early on in the program, we moved forward with a recycling program for lab waste that has diverted 18,000 lbs of waste from the landfill in a three-month period."*

Air Quality: *"The Port has been significantly involved in the development and implementation of the Houston One-Hour Ozone State Implementation Plan (SIP). To fulfill our role in this effort we have set a target to reduce our NOx emissions by 320 tons per year, which goes well beyond EPA's cost effectiveness guidelines. The PHA has been testing innovative technologies to reduce emissions and has committed to implementing these technologies through our EMS efforts to achieve this goal."*

Organization and Communication: *"EMS opened up a lot of possibilities for us. It has allowed our organization to compile and house information in a workable, usable form. We have been able to "grab" institutional knowledge and document it, especially from those retiring or leaving the organization, allowing us to better train a new generation of mechanics/line staff. We have also increased communication throughout all levels of our staff."*

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Visit www.getf.org/projects/muni.cfm and www.peercenter.net for published reports on the 1st and 2nd Initiatives, sample documentation and regular updates on the program.