ENVIROMATTERS

MDE Promotes Pollution Prevention

Pollution prevention, also known as P2, offers a proactive approach to environmental management. Its goal is the elimination of waste prior to recycling, treatment, or disposal. Examples of P2 measures include changes in equipment, process, product design, procurement, and employee training. P2 measures offer benefits over traditional environmental control and treatment technologies because they prevent the transfer of pollutants from one waste stream to another and can lower operating costs by reducing energy, water, raw material, waste disposal, and regulatory costs, as well as liability and worker exposure risks. For these reasons, MDE considers P2 to be the preferred approach to environmental management and offers a number of free services to get businesses and other organizations started. We provide P2 checklists based on business type and processes, case studies, and free on-site evaluations. MDE also recognizes organizations that have achieved P2 successes through a number of voluntary programs.

On-Site Pollution Prevention Technical Assistance
MDE offers free, confidential P2 opportunity assessments through the University of Maryland Technology Extension Service. An engineer visits your site and provides a report suggesting voluntary P2 opportunities, including energy and water conservation measures, designed to save your business money. We also offer further assistance in implementing these measures.

ISO 14001 Environmental Management System Implementation Assistance
Environmental Management Systems (EMSs) help institutionalize a commitment to environmental compliance, pollution prevention, and continual improvement within an organization. This helps businesses strengthen their compliance program and take advantage of cost-saving P2 opportunities on a continuous basis. Assistance is provided through workshops and on-site meetings. Businesses that complete this program are fully prepared to certify to the international ISO 14001 standard for EMSs if they choose to do so. The next group of businesses to participate in this program will start in September 2005.

Businesses for the Bay
We want to know which organizations are taking extra steps to reduce their impact on the environment through prevention measures and give them the recognition they deserve. The deadline for this year's awards applications is July 12, 2005. Interested companies may join this free program and download the application at www.b4bay.org. Awards will be presented by MDE Secretary Ken Philbrick at the Businesses for the Bay annual meeting in October.

Hospitals for a Healthy Environment
MDE has joined other organizations in addressing the unique set of environmental issues and opportunities that hospitals face through a voluntary program called Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E). The goals of this program are to reduce hazardous and solid waste streams and to work toward the elimination of mercury in the healthcare setting. H2E hospitals in Maryland receive technical assistance and monthly workshops.

For more information on these services and other resources to help you take advantage of the environmental and economic benefits of a "prevention-first" approach, contact MDE's Pollution Prevention Coordinator Laura Armstrong, larmstrong@mde.state.md.us at (410) 537-4119 or 1-800-633-6101 x 4119.