

# EPA: United States Environmental Protection Agency

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## Our Mission and What We Do

### Our Mission

The mission of EPA is to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment -- air, water and land -- upon which life depends.

EPA's purpose is to ensure that:

- all Americans are protected from significant risks to human health and the environment where they live, learn and work;
- national efforts to reduce environmental risk are based on the best available scientific information;
- federal laws protecting human health and the environment are enforced fairly and effectively;
- environmental protection is an integral consideration in U.S. policies concerning natural resources, human health, economic growth, energy, transportation, agriculture, industry, and international trade, and these factors are similarly considered in establishing environmental policy;
- all parts of society -- communities, individuals, businesses, and state, local and tribal governments -- have access to accurate information sufficient to effectively participate in managing human health and environmental risks;
- environmental protection contributes to making our communities and ecosystems diverse, sustainable and economically productive; and
- the United States plays a leadership role in working with other nations to protect the global environment.

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## To accomplish this mission, we:

### Develop and Enforce Regulations

When Congress writes an environmental law, we implement it by writing regulations. Often, we set national standards that states and tribes enforce through their own regulations. If they fail to meet the national standards, we can help them. We also enforce our regulations, and help companies understand the requirements.

[More about regulations](#)

[More about enforcement and compliance assistance](#)

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### Give Grants

Nearly half of our budget goes into grants to state environmental programs, non-profits, educational institutions, and others. They use the money for a wide variety of projects, from scientific studies that help

us make decisions to community cleanups. Overall, grants help us achieve our overall mission: protect human health and the environment.

[More about grants](#)

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## Study Environmental Issues

At laboratories located throughout the nation, we identify and try to solve environmental problems. To learn even more, we share information with other countries, private sector organizations, academic institutions, and other agencies.

[More about how we study these issues - Science and Technology](#)

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## Sponsor Partnerships

We don't protect the environment on our own, we work with businesses, non-profit organizations, and state and local governments through dozens of partnerships. A few examples include conserving water and energy, minimizing greenhouse gases, re-using solid waste, and getting a handle on pesticide risks. In return, we share information and publicly recognize our partners.

[More about partnerships](#)

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## Teach People About the Environment

Protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility, and starts with understanding the issues. The basics include reducing how much energy and materials you use, reusing what you can and recycling the rest. There's a lot more about that to learn!

[Learn the issues](#)

[Web sites for students and educators](#)

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## Publish Information

Through written materials and this Web site, EPA informs the public about our activities.

[Web publishing schedule](#)

[More about EPA publications](#)

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## What We Don't Do

Sometimes problems seem like something we would handle, but may actually be the responsibility of other federal, tribal, state or local agencies. It may be most appropriate for you to contact your city, county, or state environmental or health agency rather than EPA.

For example:

- Endangered Species Act is primarily managed by the [US Fish and Wildlife](#).
- Nuclear Waste - [The Department of Energy's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management](#) addresses the problem of nuclear waste.

[Read more about environmental concerns we don't handle, and suggestions for who might be able to help](#)

## Strategic Plan

EPA's Strategic Plan identifies the measurable environmental and human health outcomes the public can expect from EPA and describes how we intend to achieve those results. [Learn more about the Strategic Plan](#).

## How Do I...?

- **Find someone who works at EPA?**
  - - [Employee Directory](#)
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- **View senior manager schedules?**
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- **Visit EPA?**
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      - [Other HQ locations](#)
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