

Oregon DEQ: A Statewide Snapshot of Our Work

DEQ works collaboratively with all Oregonians across the state to provide a healthy, sustainable environment. Our work is diverse and is guided by state and federal rules and regulations, as well as environmental needs and opportunities. Our activities reflect statewide priorities, community interests and economic constraints.

Where we work, who we are

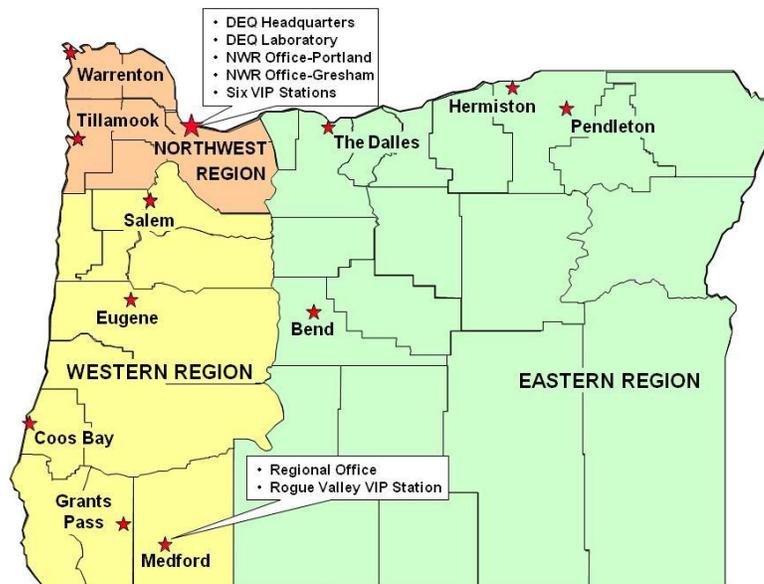
DEQ has 14 offices and seven vehicle inspection stations located throughout the state, allowing us to better connect our employees with local citizens and organizations affected by our regulations. We've also "regionalized" into three distinct districts: northwest, western and eastern region.

Approximately 750 DEQ employees issue permits, monitor environmental conditions, provide funding and technical assistance, develop policy, inspect permitted facilities, enforce environmental regulations and help Oregonians solve environmental problems every day. Employees include scientists, engineers, geologists, toxicologists, technicians, administrators, support staff and environmental specialists.

Science and environmental information are cornerstones of DEQ's credibility. We monitor the quality of Oregon's air and water at more than 1,500 sites around the state and use this information to target our pollution reduction work, inform decisions, set permit limits, reach out to new partners, and inform citizens and policy makers about what we all can do to protect Oregon's environment today and in the future.

The people we serve

Oregon's population has been growing at a rate of about 1.2 percent in recent years, with over 60 percent of the growth due to people moving in from other states and countries. Trends over the last decade indicate that more Oregonians are going to college and earning graduate degrees, median household income levels are increasing, our population is growing more ethnically diverse, and more families are speaking a



language other than English at home. At the same time, more Oregonians live in poverty compared to 2000.

Our core regulatory work

DEQ administers state environmental laws to protect the quality of Oregon's air, water and land.

Some DEQ programs, like the surface-water and air permitting programs, and the hazardous waste regulatory program, come from federal laws delegated to the state by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. How DEQ does the work is governed by DEQ's knowledge of local environmental and economic conditions. DEQ also receives direction and guidance from the Environmental Quality Commission, a five-member citizen panel appointed by the governor of Oregon for four-year terms to serve as our policy and rulemaking board. In addition, the governor, the state legislature and the communities we serve help shape DEQ's work. DEQ's strategic directions capture and reflect these drivers, and evolve over time as environmental needs change.

Land Quality

- Oversees approximately 400 permits for solid waste facilities/sites and 185 large-quantity and 349 small-quantity hazardous waste generators in Oregon
- Oversees cleanup of more than 470 contaminated sites and, over the biennium,



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Office of the Director
811 SW 6th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (503) 229-5696
(800) 452-4011
Fax: (503) 229-6762

www.deq.state.or.us

DEQ's mission is to be an active leader in restoring, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of Oregon's air, water and land.

- 300 underground storage tank facilities/sites and up to 4,200 heating oil tanks statewide
- Since 1991, has provided more than \$5.5 million dollars in grants to local governments for solid and household hazardous waste projects and programs
- Provides technical assistance for solid and hazardous waste management
- Oversees the safe processing of many tons of munitions and chemical weapons at the Umatilla Chemical Depot, from a stockpile initially including sarin projectiles, 1,750 bulk containers, 1,554 tons of HD blister agent, 364 tons of VX nerve agent and 62,425 munitions
- Receives and records about 2,300 calls per year from the Oregon Emergency Response System regarding spills or potential spills of oil or other hazardous materials
- Responds on-scene to 15 to 20 significant spills and environmental incidents across the state each year
- Conducts 600 compliance inspections of leaking underground storage tanks annually

- Issues about 1,500 tanker truck vapor certifications
- Assists over 700 Portland area employers meet commute trip reduction goals
- In 2010 will begin tracking statewide greenhouse gas emissions

Water Quality

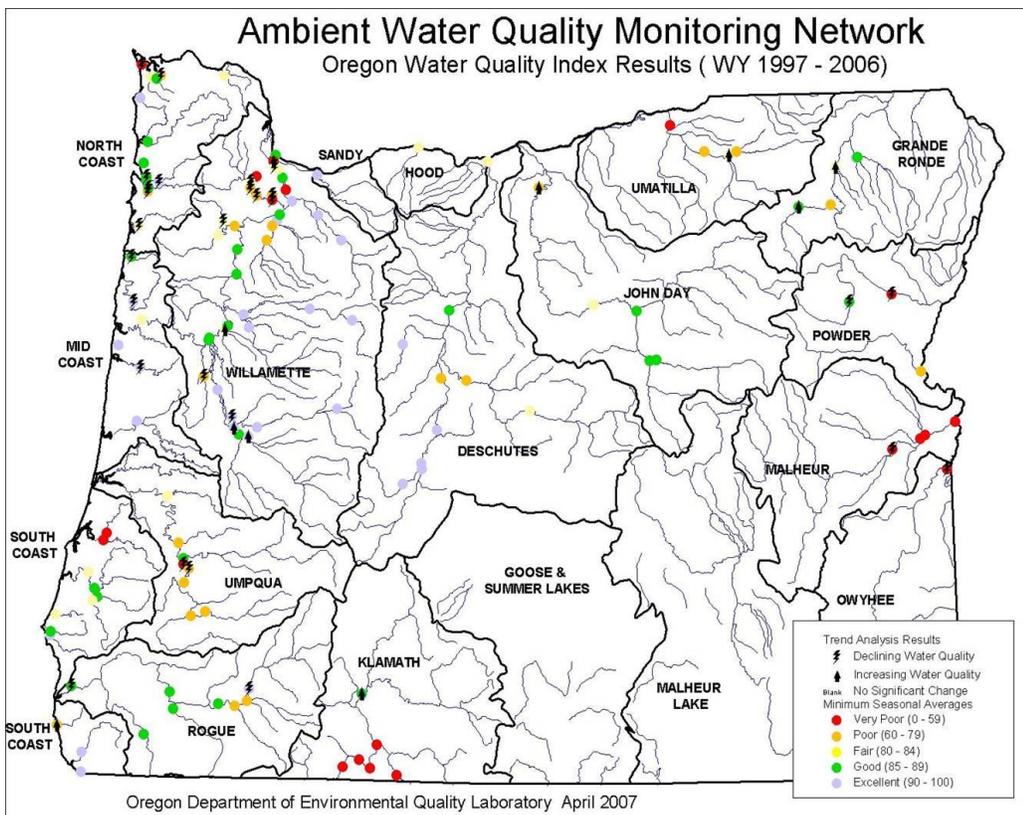
- Manages more than 5,000 federal permits and 900 state permits
- Works on more than 800 pollution control plans in 33 watershed sub-basins
- Issues state revolving fund loans to assist communities throughout Oregon, providing more than \$45 million worth of water quality improvement projects annually
- Monitors 52,000 miles of year-round streams and rivers in Oregon, a number of lakes, and 19 coastal beaches
- Manages the statewide onsite septic system program, in partnership with counties, processing roughly 14,000 septic system applications per year

Air Quality

- Manages about 125 federal permits and 1,100 state permits
- Monitors an average of 2,500 asbestos abatement projects each year
- Tests over 500,000 vehicles in Portland and Medford each year
- Permits 625 vapor recovery systems at gas stations

DEQ's Laboratory

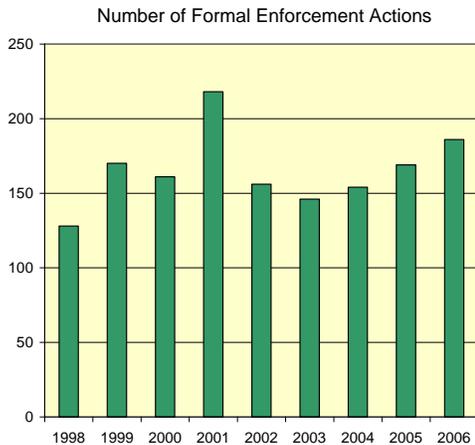
- Conducts assessments to determine status and trends, measure compliance with standards, determine sources of pollution, determine stressor/response relationships, and identify new problems
- Monitors the quality of Oregon's air and water at over 1,500 locations, collects over 20,000 samples, and performs approximately 300,000 analyses each year



Compliance and enforcement

DEQ typically assesses about 200 penalties annually for the more significant violations or chronic violators and is experimenting with new ways to streamline its work. In one new effort, DEQ anticipates adopting rules to allow issuing “expedited enforcement offers” to reduce the penalties and processes applicable to lesser violations.

DEQ uses a combination of tools, including public education and technical assistance, to ensure compliance with environmental laws and regulations. However, success of any regulatory agency relies on a combination of inspections and penalties to deter those who do not take the initiative to – or choose not to – comply with environmental laws. Recent studies demonstrate that the majority of those who are complying with environmental laws expect DEQ to maintain fairness by finding and penalizing the minority who are not complying.



Agency support and infrastructure

DEQ’s employee development programs, business systems and technological infrastructure advance our environmental work and help our employees deliver outstanding customer service. These functions are essential to help us understand and communicate changes in Oregon’s environment, demonstrate the results of public funding, respond quickly to needs and opportunities, and support an effective and diverse workforce. Maintaining adequate programs for employee development, critical business functions and modern technology requires ongoing investments. Limited funding has often constrained our ability to optimize these critical agency functions.



DEQ’s employees are vital to DEQ’s success.

- **Business systems development:** designing, developing, implementing and maintaining computer systems
- **Information services:** data exchange services, geographic information systems coordination, web site content management, web server administration
- **Employee and organization advancement:** employee recruitment and hiring, internships, mentorships, performance management, health and safety, labor union relations, benefits, strategic and operational planning, process improvement activities, meeting planning and facilitation
- **Accounting:** purchasing, contracting, invoicing, spending oversight, cost reimbursement, payroll, employee time accounting, inventory control
- **Budget:** budget planning and implementation, program guidance, purchasing, grant management, staffing requests, position reclassification
- **Environmental data management:** collecting and managing information, laboratory sample tracking and analysis, scientific and public reporting, interpreting technical data, quality assurance and control

Alternative formats

Alternative formats (Braille, large type) of this document can be made available. Contact DEQ’s Office of Communications & Outreach, Portland, at (503) 229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696.