

Improvements to permits and renewals process strengthen key system for safeguarding health and the environment

Agency: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Project Type: Black Belt Project, Value Stream Mapping

Process: NPDES Permit Renewals (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System)

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Problem: Ohio EPA needed to evaluate the entire process for permitting, including majors and minors, which includes coal. There was process variation across the state -- and an opportunity to increase efficiency to provide better customer service.

Background: The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requires a permit for all facilities discharging pollutants from a point source to a water of the state. Pollutants are broadly defined as any type of industrial, municipal or agricultural wastewater. Examples of point sources are publicly owned treatment works, industrial facilities and urban runoff. Ohio EPA administers a variety of NPDES programs.

Biggest Change: The team strategically standardized and streamlined the NPDES process in order to best serve internal and external customers.

Other Changes: Identified ways to increase communication with the applicant through the EPA website and direct guidance. • Clearly communicated the roles and responsibilities through training and outreach.

Processes - Baseline: 3

Processes - Actual: 1

Benefits: When all of the improvements are in place, 75% of permits will be renewed by their expiration date -- rather than the previous 3% and 12% for majors and minors previously.

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