



## WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

To better protect the health of its citizens and the public, the Department of Public Health has adopted an Environmental Justice (EJ) policy. Environmental Justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including a racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, bear more than their fair share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, and local programs and policies including permitting certain pollution producing facilities to operate in specific areas of the City.

On April 24, 2004, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PaDEP) put into effect policy No: 012-0501-002, entitled the "Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy". The EJ policy adopted by the City's Department of Public Health conforms with that state policy. The City's EJ policy specifically deals with the issuance of air pollution permits by the Department's Air Management Services (AMS).

AMS is the City's regulatory agency responsible for enforcing all federal, state, and city statutes and regulations pertaining to air pollution emissions and air quality within Philadelphia. AMS has authority to issue air permits for facilities in Philadelphia.

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY

This policy calls for an enhanced public participation process to provide citizens with the opportunity to express their opinions about an application for a permit that would allow a facility which would be a major air emitting source to locate in or near an **area of concern** in their neighborhood.

An **area of concern** is defined as a circle with a radius of one-half mile from the center of a proposed permit activity or, where an activity is not centralized, an area extending one-half mile beyond the boundary of the proposed activity. Other reasonably anticipated impacts such as noise, vibration or odor associated with the proposed permitted activity are considered.

If there is any census tract, entirely or in part, within this area of concern with a 30 percent or greater minority population or 20 percent or greater at or below the poverty level as defined by the US Census Bureau, the area of concern and the census tract together are considered an Environmental Justice Area. The enhanced public participation provisions of this policy apply to the area located within the area of concern and to the census tract. If no such census tract exists within the area of concern, it is not considered an Environmental Justice Area and this policy does not apply.



## THE ENHANCED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

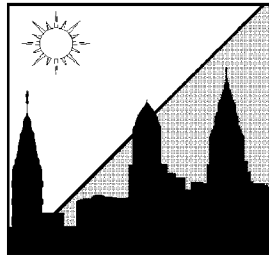
After AMS has received an application for a major source permit within an environmental justice area of concern, enhanced public participation will be implemented as follows:

**1. Public Outreach:** To promote open dialogue early in the permitting process, when AMS sends correspondence to an applicant notifying them that their application is administratively complete, the letter will indicate that the application is subject to enhanced public participation. In addition before a permit application is issued, AMS will also focus on educating communities in environmental justice areas of concern about the permit application and its potential impact. Education will be conducted at health fairs and community centers, especially those located in environmental justice areas of concern.

**2. Public Information Distribution:** AMS will produce a plain language summary of the permit application that explains the project in terms understandable to a majority of citizens within an environmental justice area. The summary will address the purpose and location of the proposed activity or facility and any anticipated impacts. These summaries will be posted on the Department of Public Health's website and dispersed to selected distribution points within an environmental justice area, such as libraries and places of worship, where they will be placed into a community information file. Copies of the entire permit application will be made available to the public. Public Notices for meetings and comment periods will be written in terminology and languages easily understood by the

majority of readers within an environmental justice area. Notices will be placed in local publications. A plain language summary and any public notices will also be mailed and e-mailed to community representatives such as City Council persons, block captains, civic and environmental leaders, and to places of worship, libraries, and schools.

**3. Public Meetings:** As part of the enhanced public participation strategy, AMS will strongly encourage potential applicants to meet with community stakeholders prior to submitting an application. AMS will attend this meeting and answer any community concerns relating to the permit review process. Within the time of a pre-application meeting and the actual submission of the application, AMS would develop the public participation strategy outlined above. AMS, in coordination with the applicant, will schedule an informational meeting within 30 days of receipt of the application. The purpose of the meeting is to inform the residents of an environmental justice area of the scope and nature of the project in a timely, interactive manner. This meeting is in addition to any other required public meetings and hearings. Applicants are encouraged to fully participate in the meeting, and may take the lead in setting up and conducting the meeting.



PHILADELPHIA DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
**AIR MANAGEMENT  
SERVICES**

**Please visit the Health Department at:**

**[www.phila.gov/health](http://www.phila.gov/health)**

**If you have questions about this Environmental Justice Policy, please contact:**

**215-685-7572**

**Resources for More Information:**

PA Dept. of Environmental Protection  
484-250-5900  
[www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,  
Region III  
215-814-5000  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

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