

Overview of the NEPA Process

Description

Participants in this course learn about NEPA's procedural requirements and implementing process. They also explore the steps to preparing a quality EIS or EA. Note: Overviews are also available specific to the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Coast Guard.

Objectives

Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to do the following:

- Understand the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), along with its requirements and regulations
- Improve planning and decisionmaking using the NEPA process
- Integrate the legal requirements of NEPA into well-designed Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) and Environmental Assessments (EAs)
- Understand the purposes of public involvement

Content

We tailor each workshop to meet the needs of the participants. The basic format of the interactive workshop includes the following components:

- **Learning the National Environmental Policy Act**
Learn the policy and procedures required by the act; the fundamental principles associated with the procedures; and the relationships among the act, its regulations, and your agency's procedures.
- **Understanding the Role of an Agency Decisionmaker**
Learn the purpose of NEPA and understand the role of the responsible official in applying the systematic process.
- **Understanding the Procedures for Preparing Quality Environmental Documents**
Learn about the differences between EISs and EAs and the appropriate format and documentation necessary to comply with NEPA requirements.
- **Understanding the Importance of Public Involvement**
Learn about NEPA's requirements for public involvement, and how a strategy can be a key factor in your effectiveness with public involvement.

Audience

Participants for this training generally include managers, responsible officials, and primary staff who need to learn NEPA skills; agency professionals responsible for leading NEPA analysis; and representatives from public or private groups and contractors requiring an understanding of NEPA.

Process

Overview of the NEPA Process is an interactive workshop. For optimum learning, class size is limited to between 15 and 25 participants. This 1-day session consists of a carefully designed combination of the following:

- 60% Lecture
- 40% Discussion and exercises

Materials

Participants receive a workshop booklet designed to support the instruction and to serve as an ongoing reference.



AGENDA - NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) OVERVIEW

Day 1

9:00 - 9:15 AM **Introduction by instructor and participants**

9:15 - 10:30 AM **History of the Act and Legal Requirements**

- Content of NEPA Sections 101 and 102
- Content of CEQ Implementing Regulations
- Defining: Major Federal Action Significantly Affecting the Quality of the Human Environment

10:30 - 11:30 AM **Break**

Course Exercise - Review NEPA Sections 101 and 102 and CEQ Regulations thoroughly - come back ready to respond to and ask questions about them

11:30 AM - 12:15 PM **Levels of Environmental Analysis and Documentation - Their Purposes**

- Categorical Exclusion (CATEX)
- Environmental Assessment (EA) - Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - Record of Decision (ROD)

12:15 - 12:30 PM **Use of Interdisciplinary Teams**

- Who are team members
- Who are not team members

12:30 - 1:00 PM **Scoping and Public Involvement**

- Defining the Scope (CEQ §1508.25: Actions, Alternatives, Impacts)
- Scoping Requirements (CEQ §1501.7)
- Public Involvement Requirements (CEQ §1506.6)

1:00 - 2:00 PM **Break**

Course Exercise - Review EA chapters 1-4

2:00 - 3:30 PM Content and Analysis Requirements for NEPA Documents (EA and EIS)

- Chapter 1 Purpose and Need (CEQ §1502.13)
- Discussion on reviewed EAs Purpose and Need Statement (strengths and weakness)
- Chapter 2 Alternatives (CEQ §1502.14)
- Discussion on reviewed EAs Alternative Section (strengths and weakness)
- Chapter 3 Affected Environment (CEQ §1502.15)
- Discussion on reviewed EAs Affected Environment Section (strengths and weakness)
- Chapter 4 Environmental Consequences (1502.16)
- Cumulative Impacts Analysis (CEQ §1508.7)
- Discussion on reviewed EAs Environmental Consequences Section (strengths and weakness)
- Methodology and Scientific Accuracy (CEQ §1502.24)
- Hard Look Doctrine - Court Requirements