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**Environmental Laws and Regulations Assignment**

1. The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) was the first environmental law enacted. When was this law enacted, what does this law require? <http://www2.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-national-environmental-policy-act>

[This was enacted in 1969. It requires an Environmental Assessment and](http://www2.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-national-environmental-policy-act) [Environmental](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww2.epa.gov%2Flaws-regulations%2Fsummary-national-environmental-policy-act&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNHxj8yYfLdaVJQyZD8s_5Arxe1bLw) [Impact Statement before any government](http://www2.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-national-environmental-policy-act) [structure](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww2.epa.gov%2Flaws-regulations%2Fsummary-national-environmental-policy-act&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNHxj8yYfLdaVJQyZD8s_5Arxe1bLw) [is built. These structures are anything from Airports, highways, parks, and military buildings.](http://www2.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-national-environmental-policy-act)

1. When was the EPA established?

December 2, 1970

1. Most environmental laws are based on the precautionary principle (Text Chapter 1), and are designed to protect human health and the environment and prevent environmental damage (pollution etc.). These laws generally address prevention of pollution in the three main types of environmental media (air, land/soil and water).

Humans interact directly with environmental media in four main ways: ingestion of water, food, paint chips etc. (kids), inhalation of air, injection (getting poked) and by dermal or skin contact. These four ways of interaction are called pathways of exposure. The main laws protecting humans from ingestion, inhalation, dermal contact etc., of contaminated media are the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Solid and Hazardous Waste Act (known as RCRA), Atomic Energy Act and the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation Liability Act or CERCLA which mandates cleanup of abandoned sites.

Use the information at the webpage below to indicate when each of laws listed above was enacted and briefly describe (a few sentences) what each law prevents and protects. As you will see at the webpage below, there are other environmental laws that address issues such as noise, endangered species etc., but for this assignment we will focus on environmental media and radiation because contact with media and radiation address the main and most common pathways of human exposure. Additionally, air, soil and water pollution represent the most significant environmental problems.

<http://www2.epa.gov/laws-regulations/laws-and-executive-orders>

* Clean Air Act
  + 1970
  + The goal of this act is to address widespread pollution risks in each state. They are responsible for creating deadlines that slowly bring the nation towards more clean air. They also created the “MACT” standards.
* Clean Water Act
  + 1972
  + Establishes the basic structure for what discharge goes into the water. It sets quality standards for all contaminants in surface water. Anything that will discharge into a river or lake needs a NPDES permit. Houses are usually exempt from this.
* Safe Drinking Water Act
  + 1974
  + Different from the clean water act that concerns the groundwater, this protects our drinking water. Sets regulations that all water companies need to follow for tap water. It also protects underground water sources on a state to state basis.
* Solid and Hazardous Waste Act (RCRA)
  + 1976
  + This gives the EPA control over hazardous waste from “cradle to grave.’ This includes the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of waste. They address the problems of keeping waste underground.
* Atomic Energy Act
  + 1946
  + This was created so that we could use atomic energy for good uses. It is responsible for guiding the government when they establish and execute radiation protection programs.
* Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation Liability Act
  + 1980
  + This is a fund of money that is ready to be put towards cleaning up natural disasters. They cover for companies till they are able to be held responsible for disasters.

1. Following passage of the federal laws listed above, the federal government authorized most states to implement these laws, and most states have adopted the federal rules and standards. The federal government allocates a certain budget to the states to do this work for them. The process of a state adopting and enforcing the federal laws and rules is called State Authorization, and most states including Utah are now authorized to enforce these rules.

Most states become authorized so the state can have local control over management of environmental laws and problems. For example, we recently discussed Stericycle in class and how the Governor and local officials are involved in this issue. If the state of Utah was not authorized to enforce the federal environmental air quality rules, the Governor and state officials would not have authority to manage these issues and the federal EPA would be in charge. Hopefully, you can see why local control is important. People want prompt action and they want to deal with someone who understands local issues.

The Utah Department of Environmental Quality (UDEQ) is the local arm of the federal EPA. UDEQ has several authorized divisions including the Divisions of Air Quality, Drinking Water, Water Quality, Solid and Hazardous Waste, Radiation Control and Environmental Response and Remediation. Each Division enforces the rules related to one of the federal laws. So, if you have an environmental issue or you need an environmental permit you will usually need to contact UDEQ.

At this webpage <http://www.deq.utah.gov/> the agencies that enforce the environmental laws are found under Air, Land and Water. Please surf around the webpages for air, water quality, drinking water, solid and hazardous waste etc. Look for the environmental rules and other information and provide a half page summary. The main point of this exercise is to make you aware of where you can find information about environmental regulations and who you need to deal with. These webpages are also used to inform the public of local environmental decisions and give the public a chance for input on these issues.

There are tons of rules and regulations to be found on this page. The page is a little hard to navigate, it took me a little while to find something specifically relating to laws. I went and found a section on drinking water. They give a little bit of a intro before giving the specific laws. They talk about how the EPA has specific regulations that every public water system has to follow. They said that they specifically comply with all of the EPA laws, but they also have some of their own laws and regulations specific to utah that they use.