

The Alabama Rivers Alliance strives to unite citizens statewide to promote the protection and rehabilitation of Alabama's waterways.

Our current programs include:

- The **Healthy Watersheds Program** focuses on the protection and restoration of water quality in Alabama's rivers
- The **Flowing Waters Program** promotes natural flow regimes in order to ensure healthy ecosystems
- The **Watershed Leadership Program** grows the capacity of Alabama citizens to protect and restore rivers.
- The **Alabama Water Agenda** empowers citizens to improve water policy and reduce the major threats to our waters.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

ADEM

www.adem.state.al.us

Main Number: 334-271-7700

Public Records Office:

Fax: 334-271-7950

E-mail: records@adem.state.al.us

Address: P.O. Box 301463

Montgomery, AL 36130-1463

EPA's Permit Compliance System

<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/data/systems/water/pcssys.html>

EPA's ECHO database

<http://www.epa-echo.gov/echo/index.html>

River Protection Essentials are publications designed to provide citizens with helpful information that can be used to protect their local waters. This educational piece provides basic information about how to perform a file review at the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM).



River Protection Essentials

Alabama Rivers Alliance



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Alabama Rivers Alliance
Water Is Life

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Performing a file review at the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) can reveal valuable information to determine a permitted facility's impact on the environment. This River Protection Essential is designed to guide you through the process of reviewing public information about regulated facilities.

The public information available in ADEM's files includes compliance information, sampling data, facility maps and drawings, photographs, inspection reports, contamination assessments, operator information, permit limits, ADEM correspondence, and administrative orders. This information can be useful for watershed assessments, water quality research, and developing permit comments.

INFORMATION YOU NEED

- Permit number if applicable
- Facility name and address (include county)
- Public notice date if applicable
- Type of permit (air, water, etc) if the facility has numerous permits
- If the exact address or permit number is unknown, provide as much information as possible. The Records Officer can work with you to determine which facility you are describing.

HOW TO SET UP A FILE REVIEW

- Submit a written request to ADEM to review a file well in advance of the time you want to review the file.
- Files for facilities with permits on public notice can be reviewed during the public notice period. Be sure to submit your request early in the public notice period.
- Requests may be submitted via e-mail, fax, or mail to the ADEM Public Records Officer. (See reverse)
- The Public Records Officer will contact you to schedule an appointment.
- Generally, you will be contacted about your request within 10 days. However, the wait for your appointment could be up to six weeks.
- Check with the Public Records Officer to see if files may be reviewed at the local field office in your area. Files for multiple facilities can be reviewed at the same time.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- ADEM charges for copy orders that are over \$10. Contact ADEM for current copy charges. Color copies and wide-format pages such as maps are more expensive. Electronic information on CD may be available for a charge.
- You are allowed to bring a portable copier to make your own copies.
- Inform the Public Records Officer of the number of people reviewing the file with you.
- ADEM can not compile information from files, so make your request as specific as possible.
- File reviews are during normal business hours.
- Bring pens/pencils and notebook.
- Keep track of how many copies you request and compare to the invoice you receive.
- Be sure to give any special copying instructions to ADEM before you leave.

RESOURCES

- Generally, water-related facility files will involve NPDES Permits (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) for the discharge of pollutants to water bodies.
- Water sampling and assessment data is also available through ADEM.
- EPA's Permit Compliance System (PCS) and Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) are on-line systems with information about regulated facilities. (See reverse)
- Other types of ADEM water-related permits include Underground Storage Tank (UST) permits (for gas stations), Underground Injection Control (UIC) permits (for discharges to groundwater), and State Indirect Discharge (SID) permits (for discharges to waste water treatment plants).