

Permitting of Industrial Projects in Abu Dhabi

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Signature on Original		
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* Refer to SG Circular S.G/C-08/12 Concerning Appointment and Responsibilities of the Corporate Management Representative at the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi.		

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1. Purpose

The Environment Agency–Abu Dhabi (EAD) establishes standards of conduct for all public and private entities for the promotion of environmentally sound management practices for industrial projects in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. This Standard Operating Procedure is developed in line with the Federal Law No. 24 of 1999 and its by-laws regarding the permitting of industrial projects and it is clearly define the roles of the proponent and EAD to put in place practices that will minimize potential environmental risks associated with industrial projects.

Federal Law No. 24 of 1999 requires that all projects or establishments obtain a license prior to starting an activity and to receive this permit, EAD must first assess the environmental impacts of the activities which will take place at the facility.

The permitting of industrial facilities supports the requirements of the Abu Dhabi Emirate Environment, Health, and Safety Management System framework (Decree 24 of 2009).

2. Overview of the Environmental Permitting Process for Industrial Facilities

EAD issues environmental permits to facilities involved in industrial activities to ensure that they implement necessary measures to protect the environment, and promote sustainability. Permits should be obtained before construction can begin on a new facility, a new addition or modification to the processes within an existing facility, relocation of a facility, or commissioning of a facility.

An application for an environmental permit must be submitted via the eServices portal, found at <http://eservices.ead.ae>. If a company/individual owns more than one facility, separate permits will be issued for each facility. The facility's current permit should be renewed annually to ensure compliance with its conditions. Any update to the permit must be made through a modification application. Permits will not be renewed if major environmental violations are found.

The Industrial Development Bureau (IDB) is the body which regulates industrial activities in Abu Dhabi. Applicants must apply for an industrial permit at the IDB prior to submitting any application to EAD. This applies to all facilities except those in a free zone.

Any application received by EAD without the required administrative documents (such as documentation from the IDB) will be returned for a resubmission of the application. The eServices application is also reviewed by the Industrial Development Bureau (IDB).

Activities and products selected in the application must match the activities and products shown in the IDB preliminary license or IDB letter.

All information in the application submitted must be accurate.

3. Application Types

A proponent can hire an EAD–approved consultancy office to complete and submit an environmental permit application for the facility. The list of registered environmental consultancy offices is found on the EAD website at <https://www.ead.ae/Documents/fixed-January%202016%20List.pdf>

A permit application for all application types is submitted through <http://eservices.ead.ae>. The application cannot be processed without documentation from the IDB, and will be returned if information entered into the application does not match the information provided in the IDB documentation.

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3.1 New facility

EAD will respond to an application for a new facility with one of the following actions:

- Permit issuance for New Facility: Construction may begin, however, to begin commissioning; a commissioning application must be submitted. Following this, a commissioning permit would be issued.
- Permit issuance for New facility with a request for an Operational Environmental Plan (OEMP) which must be submitted before the commissioning application can be submitted
- Request for an environmental study (which must be prepared by an environmental consultancy office). If the study and any subsequent studies requested are approved, the initial permit to begin construction would be provided.

3.2 Technical Modification

A technical modification is either a relocation of the facility, an expansion, or change to the process within the facility. EAD will respond to an application for a technical modification facility with one the following actions:

- Permit issuance: The modification activities may begin
- Request for an environmental study (which must be prepared by an environmental consultancy office). If the study and any subsequent studies requested are approved, the permit would be provided

3.3 Administrative Modification

An administrative modification is either a change to the name of the facility owner(s) or the name of the facility. EAD will respond to an application for an administrative modification with a permit reflecting the new change.

3.4 Commissioning Application

A commissioning application is a request to begin operation. EAD Compliance Team would inspect the facility as to whether all EAD permit conditions have been satisfied.

3.5 Renewal Application

A renewal application must be submitted prior to the expiration of the current environmental permit. If the facility contains non-compliances, the permit renewal will be blocked until the environmental violations are cleared.

EAD may reject an application if the project is considered extremely harmful to the environment, with irreversible impacts..

3.6 Decommissioning Application

Prior to the decommissioning of a facility, an application for this must be submitted to EAD. EAD may issue the approval to decommission, or may require a Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP), which must be approved by EAD prior to EAD approval on the decommissioning.

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4. Compliance Inspections on a Facility

All facilities will be inspected by the EAD compliance team. An inspection will take place prior to permit renewals, after receiving a commissioning application, and for any cases which require inspection.

5. Performing an Environmental Assessment

All environmental studies must be prepared by an environmental consultancy registered by EAD. An updated list of the registered offices can be found on:

<http://www.ead.ae/our-services/business-and-industry/>

The type of assessment to be conducted depends on factors, including, but not limited to:

- The size and type of the industrial activities
- The magnitude of the expected environmental impacts
- The existence of previous master plans or environmental studies covering the industrial area in question
- The availability of environmental baseline data

One of the following three types of environmental assessments may initially be requested: a Preliminary Environmental Review (PER), a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), or an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The SEA and EIA studies require a Terms of Reference (TOR) agreement with EAD. Additionally, all assessments must be completed by an EAD-approved and registered consultancy operating within the Abu Dhabi Emirate.

Additional detailed guidance is available for each type of environmental assessment and should be consulted before performing any of the environmental assessment types. Please note that EAD reserves the right to determine which type of study is required based on a case-by-case basis.

Details of each type of study submission requirements can be found in the relevant Technical guidance document TGDs published on the EAD website at <https://www.ead.ae/Pages/our-services/business-and-industry.aspx>.

6. Submitting a CEMP and Obtaining an Environmental Permit for Construction

Following the approval of any required environmental assessments, and before any construction activities can begin, usually for projects where an EIA was requested, the proponent may be required to submit a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) to EAD. The CEMP must contain project-specific information about the ways in which a project's environmental impact will be managed during the construction phase. This information must include best management practice and the roles and responsibilities of key personnel.

A prerequisite for the CEMP is that the proponent should have an Environmental Management System (EMS) in place. The EMS establishes quality systems to ensure consistently high environmental performance for the project.

Upon approval of the CEMP and issuance of a permit for construction, the proponent may begin construction. The EAD will monitor construction activities to ensure compliance with the permit conditions of the permit.

7. Submitting an OEMP and Obtaining an Environmental Permit for Operation

There are several steps that occur before operations at the facility can begin. The EAD may request to have an Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) prepared. The OEMP is a plan developed to ensure that appropriate environmental management practices are incorporated during the operation of a project or industry. This plan also ensures that any EAD-

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approved environmental studies have been properly implemented. The proponent should submit the OEMP to the permitting agency no later than 1 month prior to beginning operations. Following EAD approval to the OEMP, the applicant must submit a commissioning application after which, an inspection on the facility will be done. If all EAD requirements have been implemented, a commissioning permit can be issued.

8. Submitting a DEMP and Obtaining EAD Approval

Prior to decommissioning of a facility, a Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) may be requested by the EAD. Following the approval of this plan, EAD approval would be provided.

9. Document Change History

Doc. No.	Rev. No.	Rev. Date	Revision Description	Page No.	Approved by
EAD-EQ-PCE-SOP-03	00	17.10.2011	First Issue		SG
EAD-EQ-PCE-SOP-03	01	14.04.2014	Reformat document and add abbreviations	All	SG
EAD-EQ-PCE-SOP-03	02	15.03.2016	Procedure will be for Industrial projects only.	All	SG
Remarks:					