

Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act Approvals and Codes of Practice Electronic Documentation Submission Protocol

1. BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Environment and Water is responsible for the collection, preservation and dissemination of all statutory information submitted by Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (EPEA) approval holders.

Alberta Environment and Water (AEW) is making strides to be able to accept electronic-only submissions, without accompanying paper copies, for all EPEA Approvals records to achieve four broad objectives:

- to maximize the amount of digital data submitted to AEW
- to maximize the usefulness of statutory digital data that is publicly available
- to minimize costs associated with acceptance, storage and release of digital information and
- to facilitate the regulatory review process.

This Guidance Document is intended to assist applicants/approval holders with the submission of regulatory information in electronic format to Alberta Environment and Water (hereafter referred to as AEW). This document details the requirements for the submission of electronic submissions. It should be stressed that this Guidance Document reflects the current situation and will be regularly updated in the light of changes in legislation and the impact of any new and relevant technologies.

General considerations

Scope:

This guidance applies to all submissions related to the authorization and monitoring of EPEA Approvals, including applications, amendments, renewals, monitoring and reporting, plans, studies, notifications, authorizations and correspondence.

Confidentiality:

When submitting a document that contains information that you wish held in confidence [See EPEA Sec. 35(4)], we request that you submit three separate documents. The first document should contain all the information that is publicly disclosed under EPEA; the second document should contain the section(s) of the submission that you wish held in confidence; and the third document should be your request for confidentiality letter. If the director determines that the information will be accepted and held in confidence, the second and third document will be held in confidence by AEW.

2. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Transmission Media

Acceptable Media Choice device or channel should be appropriate to the volume of data submitted:

- E-mail
- File Transfer Protocol
- CD-ROM
- DVD-ROM

- USB Memory stick

Applicants should provide the electronic information on the smallest number of devices possible, taking into consideration the size of the submission. For example, if an individual submission is of such a size as to span several CDs, the provision of a DVD or USB memory stick is recommended.

AEW will not accept any hardware (laptops, desktops, portable hard drives, etc.) from applicants in connection with the submission of information in electronic format. The electronic information should be directly readable and usable on AEW hardware and software.

Labeling of Media:

Each media device submitted to AEW should include the following label information, clearly presented and printed on the media or an accompanying cover letter:

- the applicant's name
- the facility name
- the full approval number
- a summary of the content (i.e. Soil Monitoring report)

Transportation of Media:

The electronic media should be packed adequately to prevent damage and the package should include a cover letter. The physical security of the submission during transportation is the responsibility of the applicant. Once received by AEW, security and submission integrity is the sole responsibility of the department.

Password protection

Submission or file level security through disk encryption is not permitted. If one-time security settings or password protection of an electronic submission is used this could constitute grounds for the rejection of the submission.

Virus protection

The applicant is responsible for checking the submission for viruses. After receipt at AEW, an internal virus check will be performed. If a virus is detected it will constitute grounds for rejection of the electronic submission.

Working copies

AEW will securely destroy submission devices once the information has been uploaded into the department's electronic records management system. A submitted device will not be returned to the sender.

3. FILE FORMATS

PDF

In general terms the majority of documents included in electronic submissions should be in PDF format. Portable Document Format (PDF) is an open, de facto, electronic publishing standard, created by Adobe Systems Incorporated. This format has been chosen because of its wide acceptance as a standard format, the ease of creation from other formats and the availability of free software to read the files.

PDF/A is preferable to standard PDF because it will ensure the long term preservation of the submitted document and encapsulates all the information needed to display the document (fonts, color spaces, etc) in the document. It also prevents JavaScript (which could allow malicious software to be present), encryption and external content references. Whenever possible, provide documents to AEW in PDF/A compliant format rather than standard PDF.

The commercial version of Adobe Acrobat is normally used to create PDF files. PDF files should be legible with Adobe Acrobat Reader, version 6.1 or higher. The reader is available free of charge via <http://www.adobe.com/>.

Documents should be generated from electronic source documents and not from scanned material, except where access to the source electronic file is unavailable or where a signature is required.

Bookmarks:

Navigation through an electronic submission is greatly enhanced by the intelligent use of bookmarks. It is expected that any document that has a Table of Contents (TOC) will have bookmarks. Documents without TOCs should have bookmarks included where it aids in the navigation around the document content. For example, a 300 page file should use bookmarks to aid navigation.

Other File Formats

Other file formats such as Microsoft Excel may be required in addition to the PDF requirement for the submission of monitoring and reporting data, especially for those records that are to be provided to the Data Management Group within AEW. In those cases, two separate file formats for the information should be provided: a data table in Excel and a PDF report of the data.

Technical Reports:

All text based technical reports of any kind should retain the well established structure and sequence of hardcopy (paper) reporting and must include a detailed contents page listing:

- all figures, tables and plates
- all plans, maps, figures and any other attachments
- any appendices such as additional reports and tabular data
- any code, colour or shading used on a map, profile, or other document or record must be explained in an accompanying legend.

Images:

Maps, plans, figures and photographs not embodied in report text may be in the following file formats:

- Adobe Acrobat (.pdf)
- Tagged Image File Format (.tif): minimum resolution is 300 dpi
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (.jpg): minimum resolution is 300dpi

Where possible, plans and maps should be readable if printed to not exceed B ledger size (279 x 432 mm).