

PROACTIVE APPROACH TO COMPLIANCE & OUTREACH



Florida's environmental laws require sites to be developed, projects to be built and facilities to be operated in a manner that is protective of the environment. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection issues permits and authorizations for a wide variety of facilities and activities, such as air emissions, coastal construction, landfills, marinas and wastewater plants. Along with rules and statutes, these authorizations establish criteria and conditions that help protect and preserve Florida's air and water quality.

Priority

- » Compliance is a priority for DEP because it is key to protecting Florida's public health and the environment. Compliance means that regulated businesses and facilities are following the law and adhering to permit conditions, which helps to prevent environmental harm.
- » The department takes a proactive approach to protecting Florida's environment through education and outreach. DEP's overall high compliance rate of 97 percent for all regulated facilities in fiscal year 2014-15 demonstrates that its proactive approach to protecting Florida's environment is working. The department's first goal is to prevent environmental harm from occurring by using outreach to ensure facilities understand how to maintain compliance. When non-compliance does occur, the department provides compliance assistance to help bring a facility back into compliance as quickly as possible, preventing and reducing any harm to the environmental or public health. However, when enforcement is necessary, action is taken to hold violators accountable.

Compliance Determinations

- » Compliance determinations are made through activities such as inspections or review of monitoring reports in accordance with a facility's permit. The site is then determined to be "In Compliance," "Minor Out of Compliance" or "Significant Out of Compliance."
- » A facility that is "In Compliance" is adhering to the conditions of a permit or other written authorization, and other applicable rules and laws. DEP's compliance rate is based on thousands of inspections and monitoring samples statewide.
- » An example of a "Minor Out of Compliance" violation is one that presents minor or no environmental harm, such as tardy paperwork. Compliance is DEP's objective, and resolving non-compliance quickly and informally is preferred when violations are minor and recurrence can be eliminated. Through compliance assistance efforts, the department works to return facilities to "In Compliance."
- » An example of a "Significant Out of Compliance" violation is one that the department determines has indeed caused moderate or major environmental harm.
- » When determining the appropriate response to any compliance issue, the department takes into account many factors, including:
 - How serious was the violation?
 - Was the violation inadvertent, due to negligence or willful?
 - Is it a first-time violator or a chronic offender?
 - Can any damage to the environment be undone or remediated quickly?
 - Can the site or facility be brought back into compliance without formal enforcement?
 - Is the violator responding in good faith?

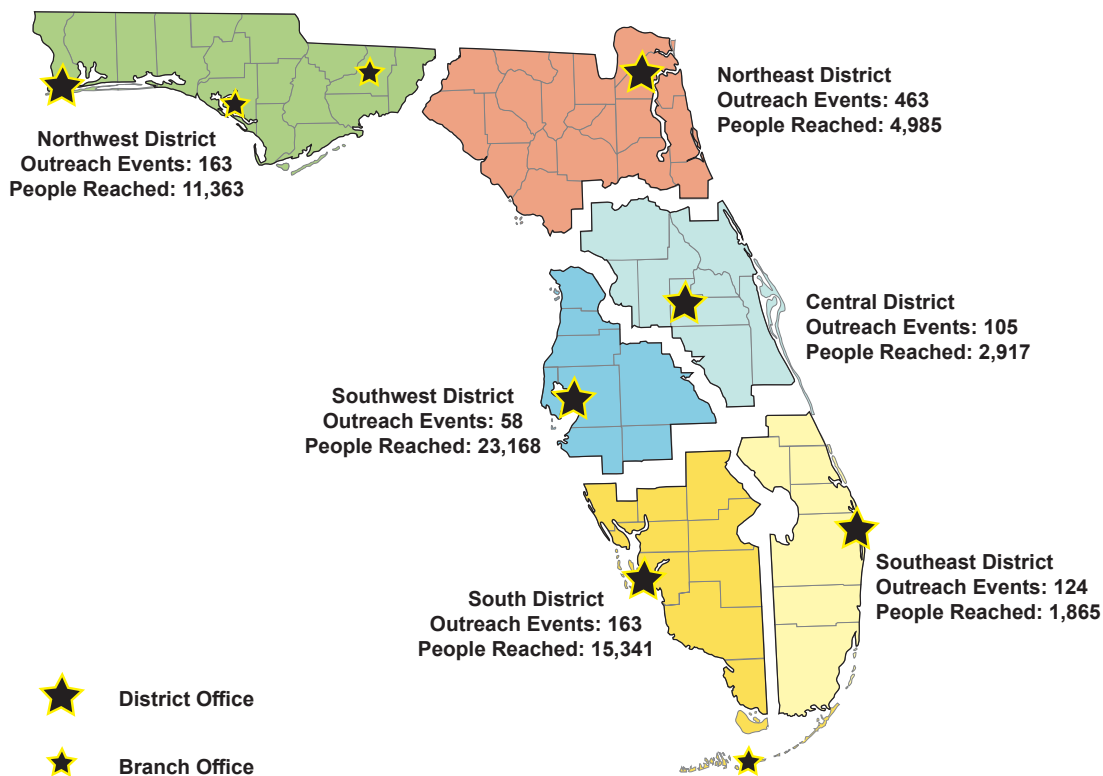
FAST FACTS

- DEP regulates **100,000+** facilities and sites
- DEP's regulatory programs boast a **97 percent** compliance rate in 2015 for air, water and waste facilities.
- According to the "State of the Air" from the American Lung Association in 2015, Florida experienced **zero** unhealthy days from ozone pollution during the three-year study period. In addition, Florida boasts **10** of the cleanest air-quality counties nationwide.
- DEP's outreach efforts for fiscal year 2014-15 included **1,076** events that reached **59,639** people. Outreach efforts increase compliance, which protects the environment.
- **Three** regulatory divisions and **six** district offices oversee **13** programs and **168** permit types.

DEP Outreach

- » Outreach includes DEP initiatives that increase environmental awareness and enhance the department's commitment to protecting Florida's environment. These proactive activities go over and above the day-to-day implementation of its core regulatory services such as issuing permits, performing compliance inspections or compliance assistance efforts.
- » The purpose of outreach is to prevent environmental harm and violations from occurring, rather than addressing violations after they have occurred.
- » In keeping with the department's goal of partnering with communities and businesses to protect natural resources and promote economic growth, DEP routinely conducts free training workshops for the regulated community. This training helps ensure environmental compliance while also saving businesses money.

Outreach Efforts in Fiscal Year 2014-15



DEP's Outreach and Educational Efforts Fall into Three Main Categories:

- 1. Training for regulated industry**
groups or individuals to improve compliance rates and increase overall environmental stewardship. DEP's outreach efforts are provided to private and public sectors, including businesses, local governments and utilities. Examples of outreach efforts include: hazardous waste trainings at facilities; site visits to dry cleaners for educational purposes; biosolids training for municipal staffs; and contractor workshops for the boating industry.
- 2. Training for non-regulated industries**
that have a vested interest, such as environmental stakeholders and academic, professional or social organizations. Examples of outreach efforts include presentations to Master Gardeners, marine science students or River Keepers, Sierra Club, etc.
- 3. Broad educational outreach**
to the community through various events that promote overall environmental stewardship, including Earth Day celebrations, boat shows, environmental festivals and organized citizen groups.