



Reporting Complaints about Pollution and Other Environmental Violations

There are many ways in which citizens of Guyana can play an active part in environmental protection. One such way is by helping the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) fulfill its responsibilities by identifying and reporting environmental violations. As part of the Agency's function to take necessary steps to ensure conservation, protection and sustainable use of Guyana's natural resources, investigations are required to be carried out to address environmental complaints filed by public citizens. But how do you go about doing this, and what information are you required to give in this process? Read on to find the answers to these questions and more about the EPA's complaint process.

Where and to whom can a Complaint be reported?

If you are a witness to an act that you believe would have negative impacts on the environment, you may contact the EPA directly by simply making a phone call, sending us a letter or an e-mail or by messaging us on Facebook or Instagram. You may even visit us if you wish! Any of the Agency's Environmental Officers will be happy to assist you since they are all trained to record any complaint reported that violates the Environmental Protection Act, Cap 20:05, Laws of Guyana. Additionally, you may also report a complaint to these Officers while they are in the field. The EPA takes environmental pollution seriously and works assiduously to ensure complaints are addressed in a timely manner.

What Information Will be Needed?

When you contact the EPA to report a complaint, the Environmental Officer receiving that complaint will need to complete a special form based on the information you give. This information includes your name and contact information, which is needed in order for us to update you on any action taken regarding the complaint; the name (if known) and address of the polluter; and the location and nature of the pollution. It must be noted that all information given by the complainant is confidential, hence, it would not be disclosed to anyone, especially the defaulter!

Does the EPA Investigate all Environmental Violations?

While the Agency is mandated to ensure the effective management of the natural environment and to take necessary steps to prevent and control pollution, there are other organisations that are responsible for investigating certain types of pollution and environmental issues. For instance, if you have witnessed the improper disposal of an animal carcass, or have an increased presence of mosquitos around your home, you should contact the local authority (NDC, RDC, Town Council or the Public Health

Department) of the community in which the violation occurred. However, if you are unsure of who to contact, the complaint can be reported to the EPA and we would direct you to the relevant authority. The Officer would also record it and follow-up with the organisation responsible for addressing the issue.

Now that you are aware of how to go about reporting a complaint concerning the environment, the EPA invites you to be more vigilant towards the environment. By doing this, you will allow the EPA to better ensure compliance with its Regulation. Join us again next week as we explain the steps in investigating a complaint reported to the Agency.

You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: “Our Earth, Our Environment”, C/O ECEA Programme, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: eit.epaguyana@gmail.com or follow us on Facebook and Instagram.