

BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (MECCS) inspectors verify compliance with the *Environmental Management Act (EMA)* (including associated permits, regulations and codes of practice) by conducting inspections. This is to ensure regulated parties are following the requirements designed to protect the environment and human health and to provide them the opportunity to improve their environmental business practices. Inspections can be carried out on site or as an office assessment of information received.

Why am I being inspected?

MECCS inspectors are committed to ensuring authorization holders stay in compliance with regulatory requirements. When determining where to inspect, MECCS staff may look at potential risk, geographic location, or length of time since the last inspection. Inspections are also done as part of industry wide audits to determine compliance with specific requirements. The Inspection may also be related to a complaint or may be in response to an incident.

When will I be inspected?

Inspectors may inform you of the inspection, or may come unannounced. Inspections are typically during regular business hours, but may be after hours in the event of a spill or other emergency. Office assessments can be done at any point in time with or without notice.

Who will be attending an on-site inspection?

An Environmental Protection Officer (EPO), designated as an inspector under *EMA* Section 1(1) will attend and lead the inspection. The inspector may be accompanied by additional MECCS staff, Conservation Officers and/or any other party deemed necessary to complete the inspection.

What do I need to show the EPO? What will they be looking at?

On-site inspections may focus on the entire facility or just one or two specific areas. In an on-site inspection EPO's will observe the facility and site operations, examine containers, labels, spills, discharges, waste generation and emissions control equipment. The EPO may ask questions, take notes and photographs, collect samples, review monitoring data, waste handling and disposal information, contingency plans, or other records and reports as per the permit or authorization requirements.

How long will the inspection take?

The length of the inspection will vary. Site inspections of very large facilities may take a day or two, other facilities, a few hours. Inspection records will be provided to you at a later date.

Tips to be prepared for an Inspection:

- Be aware of your Permit or Authorization requirements.
- If you have questions during or after an inspection – ask.
- Designate a contact person at your facility for MECCS Staff inquiries.
- Be honest and transparent to show your willingness to comply.
- Be aware of areas at the facility where waste accumulates and is stored.
- A site plan of the facility can be useful.
- Organize records and have them easily accessible.
- Consider developing a self-assessment program at your facility to ensure that you are complying with environmental requirements.

Remember: an inspector's goal is to keep your facility in compliance with the BC *Environmental Management Act*.

How is compliance measured?

Compliance is measured against the requirements set out in your authorization or the regulation you are operating under. The facility/operation is assessed as either in or out of compliance with each individual requirement.

How will I receive inspection results?

Soon after the inspection, the inspector will either email or hardcopy mail an inspection record outlining the inspection results.