

LDEQ Complaint Policy

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) receives approximately 10,000 environmental incident notifications annually. Of these notifications, over 4000 are citizen complaints. LDEQ's executive staff has authorized the creation of this Environmental Complaint Policy to set forth guidelines and procedures to best manage departmental resources while maintaining effective customer service to the citizens of the state regarding environmental complaints. LDEQ shall protect public health and the environment by evaluating each environmental complaint and bring about statutory and regulatory compliance through a consistent and structured process. This policy shall be adhered barring unusual or unforeseen circumstances which may occur where all or part of this policy cannot be followed.

The purpose of this policy is to outline how DEQ will address the following:

- Anonymous complaints
- Complaints of an emergency condition
- Complaints of criminal activity
- Complaints beyond LDEQ's regulatory authority

Anonymous Complainants

Research indicates that an estimated ten percent of the total complaints received are from anonymous sources. Anonymous complaints often lack the necessary information for thorough investigations, with no means to contact the complainant for additional information. Anonymous complainants do at times attempt to contact the Department for follow-up information, creating a dilemma for investigators who were unable to perform an adequate investigation due to the lack of initial information. In some cases, anonymous complaints are questionable in nature and thereby create an unnecessary work load for LDEQ personnel to investigate. Anonymous complaints received by LDEQ will generally be evaluated and handled at the regional level.

Complaints of an Emergency Condition

LDEQ may receive a complaint that can be described as a spill, release or uncontrolled/unauthorized discharge that may endanger the health and safety of the public, cause significant adverse impact to the land, water or air environment, or cause severe damage to property. LDEQ has procedures to provide notification to the state and local authorities of the emergency. If appropriate, LDEQ regional emergency responders will be dispatched.

Complaints of Criminal Activity

LDEQ receives complaints of criminal activity or activities that may appear to be criminal. LDEQ will process these complaints in accordance with the information provided by the complainant. The complaint will be managed as a parallel referral and will be referred to both the CID and the appropriate region for investigation.

Complaints beyond LDEQ's Regulatory Authority

LDEQ also receives complaints regarding activities that are outside of its regulatory authority. The LDEQ's policy will be to provide the complainant, when possible, with the information necessary to refer the complaint to the appropriate authorities. Common examples of such complaints include, but are not limited to complaints regarding:

- Agricultural activities (chicken litter, crop burning, pesticide/herbicide application, crop duster activities, Department of Agriculture contact phone number (225) 922-1269)
- Drinking water quality issues
- Indoor air quality issues, including mold problems

It is recommended that a citizen directly contact the state agency that would have the designated regulatory authority regarding a specific complaint where LDEQ does not have that authority. The web link to all Louisiana state agencies:

http://louisiana.gov/Government/Agency_Index/