



# Department of Environmental Management

## Spotlight on Environmental Protection

### How to File a Complaint

Complaints can be called into OC&I during normal business hours (8:30 to 4:00 Monday through Friday) at 401-222-1360. Complaints outside of normal business hours or on weekends and holidays can be called into the DEM's 24 hour number at 401-222-3070.

OC&I also receives complaints via email at [compliance2@dem.ri.gov](mailto:compliance2@dem.ri.gov), by fax at 401-222-3811, or by letter at 235 Promenade Street, Room 220, Providence, Rhode Island 02908-5767.

All complaints are public records, so if you wish to file a complaint but don't want it known who is complaining, you can file the complaints anonymously.

## Complaint Response Program

Each of the DEM's regulatory offices investigate complaints received concerning alleged environmental violations. The Offices of Water Resources, Air Resources and Waste Management respond solely to complaints involving permitted activity or facilities/sites. The Office of Compliance and Inspection (OC&I) investigates all complaints received, except ones that involve permitted activity or permitted facilities/sites. Complaints involving permitted activity or permitted facilities/sites are investigated by the office that issued the permit.

The OC&I is responsible for regulatory compliance and enforcement for the following programs: Air Pollution, Dam Safety, Freshwater Wetlands, Hazardous Waste, Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (i.e., Septic Systems), Solid and Medical Waste, Underground and Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, and Water Pollution.

**Air Pollution** – The program responds to complaints involving visible emissions, odors, fugitive dust, and exterior lead paint removal.

**Dam Safety** – The program responds to complaints involving potential unsafe conditions at dams.

**Freshwater Wetlands** – The program responds to complaints involving unauthorized alterations to freshwater wetlands such as filling, excavating, grading, clearing, or construction.

**Hazardous Waste** – The program responds to complaints involving illegal disposal or mismanagement of hazardous waste.





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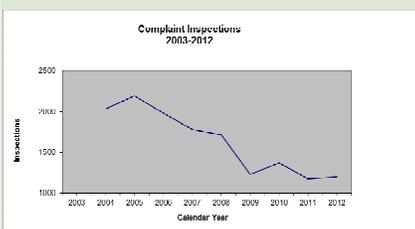
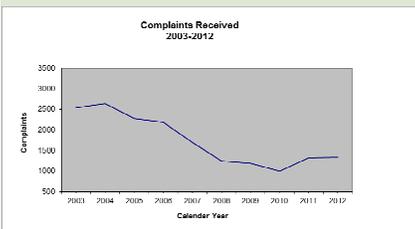
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### 2012 Statistics

1321 complaints  
1200 complaint inspections

### Recent History

The complaints received and the complaints inspected from 2003 through 2012 are illustrated by the graphs below.



### **On-Site Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS or Septic System) –**

The program responds to complaints involving septic system overflows or failures, septic odors, laundry discharges, and illegal repairs.

**Underground Storage Tanks (UST)/Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST) –** The program responds to complaints involving underground storage tanks such as leaking or abandoned tanks.

**Solid Waste/Medical Waste –** The program responds to complaints involving illegal disposal of solid waste and operation of unlicensed facilities handling solid waste, construction & demolition debris, compost or other forms of solid waste.



**Water Pollution –** The program responds to complaints involving discharges of pollutants to surface waters or ground waters or in a location likely to enter such waters.

OC&I issues informal or formal enforcement actions for violations that are identified and tracks compliance until environmental violations are corrected. Informal enforcement includes those actions that do not result in an enforceable order or assessment of a penalty. Formal enforcement is usually in the form of a Notice of Violation (NOV). Each NOV advises the responsible party of the alleged facts that support the violation, the statutes and regulations that are alleged to have been violated, the requirements to meet compliance and usually include an administrative penalty. The requirements to meet compliance are set forth in the order portion of the NOV.