

Moving Beyond Compliance: An Environment Management System at Tufts

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The Environmental Management Program views environmental compliance at Tufts as a baseline that Tufts Environmental Policy builds upon to meet and exceed environmental standards. Developing and implementing an Environment Management System (EMS) is a goal for the Environmental Management Program in FY 2014. An EMS is a strategic planning effort on a program level to ensure that all environmental compliance needs are met and that the EM program is operating consistently with University-wide goals and strategies.

Since the creation of the Clean Air Act in 1970, Tufts has been required to comply with laws and regulations intended to protect human health and the environment. As new laws and regulations were promulgated, Tufts ten academic schools as well as the operations division were responsible for implementation; sometimes drastically changing decades of common practices.

As environmental policy evolves nationally, it appears that the era of dynamic policy changes is shifting to an era of incremental change within existing laws such as increased focus on stormwater pollution, greenhouse gases and water withdrawals. Likewise at Tufts, much success has been achieved in achieving compliance with large environmental regulations and we can now turn to both maintaining compliance and improving environmental performance using an EMS.

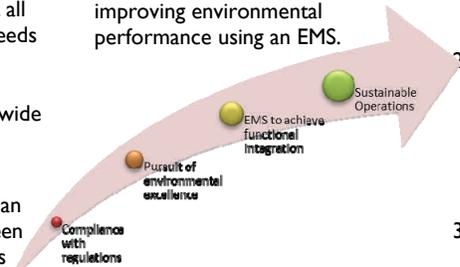


Figure 1: Steps to Improve Environmental Performance

An Environmental Management System develops and implements a plan to manage environmental impacts and provides a systematic approach to seek continuous improvement, improve performance, engage stakeholders and make decisions based on the best available data and metrics. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection provides a useful definition:

“An environmental management system is a set of management processes and procedures that allows an organization to analyze, control and reduce the environmental impact of its activities, products and services regulatory demands in a proactive, systematic and cost-effective manner. An EMS is appropriate for all kinds of organizations of varying sizes in public and private sectors.”

Tufts EMS will follow the Plan-Do-Check-Act Model of Continual Improvement which includes the following components:

1. **Plan: What are we going to do?** Identify all existing and planned environmental impacts of Tufts activities and develop a plan to manage them, including strategic and/or integrated planning.
2. **Do: Do what we planned.** Implement programs to meet environmental requirements and Tufts performance standards.
3. **Check: Have we met our expectations?** Conduct management reviews, audits and data analysis to determine whether Tufts is achieving the goals outlined in the beginning and identify opportunities for improvement.
4. **Act: Do we need any changes?** Based on management reviews and audits, make necessary adjustments to the EMS to ensure continuous improvement.

ISO 14001 is a series of voluntary standards set by the International Organization for Standardization followed by 20,000 organizations around the world that result in an environmental management system. Tufts EMS will use ISO 14001 as a guide to implement an EMS consistent with Tufts international stature.

Tufts is fortunate to have many components needed to create an EMS already in place, all of which can be leveraged to formally develop and implement an EMS:

- Students, faculty and staff who are committed to environmental stewardship;
- University-wide technology assets to assist with data collection and analysis;
- Partners like Tufts Audit and Management Advisory Services and Tufts Facilities Services who are committed to sharing their expertise to help the EM program seek continuous improvement.

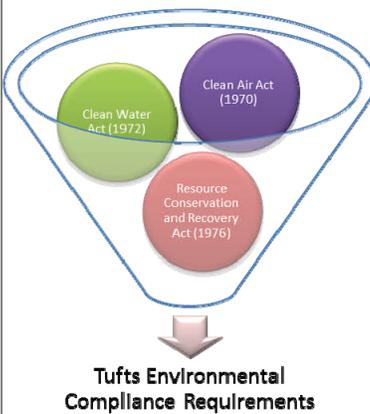


Figure 2: Plan-Do-Check-Act Model of Continual Improvement