

NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT DIVISION BACKGROUND

New Mexico law charges the Environmental Improvement Division (EID) of the New Mexico Health and Environment Department with responsibility for environmental management and consumer protection in order to promote the health, safety, comfort and well-being of the citizens of New Mexico. The EID is further charged with protecting the current inhabitants of the state, as well as those yet unborn, from health threats posed by the environment.

In order to fulfill these responsibilities, the state legislature has mandated that the EID develop and enforce regulations in areas including:

1. Food production
2. Water supply
3. Water pollution control
4. Wastewater disposal by individual septic tanks and alternative systems
5. Air quality
6. Solid waste sanitation and refuse disposal
7. Radiation control and radioactive material disposal
8. Occupational health and safety
9. Sanitation of public swimming pools and public baths

Regulations in all areas, except water pollution control, are adopted and issued after a public hearing by the Environmental Improvement Board which is appointed by the governor. Water pollution control regulations are adopted and issued by the Water Quality Control Commission. The EID is a constituent agency of the commission, which is composed of the directors or designated representatives of eight agencies and a representative of the public appointed by the governor.

The EID does more than just enforce regulations, however. It offers consultation services to citizens, local governments and industry; per-

forms field research; publishes findings in special reports and professional journals; and helps communities obtain funding for various projects. The division also operates emergency response teams to deal with food poisonings, plague incidents, hazardous waste exposures and other incidents.

The EID carries out its environmental programs through bureaus located in Santa Fe responsible for air quality management, occupational health and safety, radiation protection, water pollution control and community support services. In addition, the EID maintains district offices in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Roswell, Santa Fe and 18 field offices located throughout the state to implement a variety of environmental health programs at the community level.