

One of the purposes of The Manitoba Environment Act is to provide for public consultation in environmental decision making. The Environment Act prescribes that a public registry be established and be made available to the public, with contents for each proposal under review defined in the Act. Although the Act refers to a single registry, an online registry as well as two hard copy locations have been established to allow convenient public access to posted information. Most material appearing in the public registry system pertains to development proposals undergoing the environmental assessment and licensing process prescribed by The Environment Act or The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act. However, other material pertaining to Manitoba environmental management matters may also be placed in the public registries for review and comment. This material includes some annual reports on environmental stewardship programs, and special reviews of legislation, regulations and policy.

This guide provides an overview for users of the public registry system. It includes information on the location of the registries, the type of material that may be found in the registries, how the registries may be used, and information on how and when material is placed in the registries.

Public Registry Locations

An online electronic public registry has been established for the public to access all Environment Act and Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act assessment and licencing material. Project information may be accessed in the online registry at: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/eal/registries/index.html>.

Hard copy material is placed in two public registry locations in Winnipeg:

Manitoba Legislative Library
200 Vaughan Street
Winnipeg
Phone: (204) 945-4330

Millennium Public Library
4th Floor, 251 Donald Street
Winnipeg
Phone (204) 986-6450

Other locations may be provided throughout Manitoba for projects of interest in that area. First Nation, town, village and municipal offices may be used as public registry locations.

For all projects filed since 2013, the online registry contains the same information that was previously available in hard copy at former public registries. For older projects, some of the information may not be available electronically. This information may be accessed by contacting the Environmental Approvals Branch. All valid Environment Act licences are available in the online registry.

Material Available in the Public Registries

When an Environment Act or Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act Proposal is received by the Environmental Approvals Branch and the environmental assessment process begins, the following material is placed in all of the public registries being used for that project:

1. A copy of the Proposal;
2. A copy of the letter to the applicant that names the contact person for the environmental assessment process; and
3. A copy of the advertisement of the Proposal. The advertisement briefly describes the project, lists public registry locations, the contact person, and provides the deadline date for comments on the Proposal. It also lists the newspapers used to advertise the Proposal and the publication dates of the advertisements.

After the deadline date for comments on the Proposal has passed, all comments provided by the public and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the project are placed in the public registries. The TAC is a standing committee of representatives from all federal and provincial government departments that may have a regulatory interest in a project or technical advice on the project's environmental effects and methods of mitigating these effects.

Depending on the level of public interest in a project and on the time needed to review all comments received on a project, these comments may be placed in the public registries any time between the end of the Proposal's comment period and the issuance of an Environment Act or Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act Licence. Under normal circumstances, comments are placed in the public registries soon after the end of the comment period.

If additional information is requested from the applicant by the contact person to address public and/or TAC comments, this request is also placed in the public registries. This is often done at the same time that the comments are placed in the public registries.

Further information may be placed in the public registries as necessary during the environmental assessment process. Additional rounds of questions and responses may be placed as they arrive, or at the end of the process.

Once the environmental assessment process is concluded and a licensing decision is made, more material is placed in the public registries. This includes any additional information requests and responses that have not already been placed in the registries, as well as a project summary and a copy of the Environment Act or Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act Licence. If a licence is not issued for a project, the reasons for this decision are documented in the public registries.

For projects that involve public hearings by the Clean Environment Commission, the public registries will include public and TAC comments on the Proposal, as well as any requests for additional information from the Environmental Approvals Branch and the corresponding responses. Project summaries are not provided for these projects, as the report of the Clean Environment Commission documents the environmental assessment process. A copy of the Environment Act Licence or documentation for the refusal of a licence is provided in the public registries.

Following the issuance of an Environment Act or Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act Licence, additional material may be placed in the public registries depending on public interest in the project. For example, documents required by the licence such as environmental protection plans and monitoring reports may be placed in the public registries if there was considerable public interest in this information during the environmental assessment process. Information pertaining to alterations to the project is also placed in the public registries. Members of the public who wish to view material that is not available in the public registries may contact the Environmental Approvals Branch contact person for the project to discuss the availability of information. The number of projects and the volume of material received post-licensing precludes the routine placement of this material in the public registries for all projects.

Other material pertaining to Manitoba environmental management matters may also be placed in the public registries for review and comment, including special reviews of legislation, regulations and policy. The availability of this material for review is generally advertised in newspapers and on the Environmental Approvals Branch website, with public registry locations, deadlines and contact persons provided.

How to Use the Public Registries

The information available in the public registries allows members of the public to be aware of the details of a project undergoing the environmental assessment and licensing process, and provides an opportunity for public comments on the project that will be incorporated in the process. The public registries provide information on deadlines for comments, who comments should be directed to, and how comments may be provided by letter, fax and email. Following the environmental assessment and licensing process, members of the public can use the public registries to access a project summary that documents the environmental assessment and licensing process, and to access the Environment Act or Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act Licence for the project. Additional material obtained before and after the issuance of the licence may also be available in the public registries, and contact information is available for enquiries about the environmental assessment and licensing of the project.

The material described above is placed in all public registries used for a particular project, including the electronic public registry, in reverse chronological order, with the most recent material at the top of the file and the oldest information at the bottom. For most completed files, this means that the licence and project summary are at the top of the file, and the Environment Act or Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act Proposal is at the bottom of the file.

How Material is Placed in the Public Registries

Material is uploaded to the online registry website on a weekly basis or as required to ensure prompt and timely access to information. If you are unable to find public registry material, the Environmental Approvals Branch contact person for the project can assist by determining what information should be available, and in replacing any missing information. Contact persons and their areas of specialization are listed at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/eal/contact.html>.

For frequent users of the public registries, and others interested in a particular project in the environmental assessment and licensing process, the Environmental Approvals Branch provides a subscription service for updates of materials placed in the public registries. Information on this service is available on the Branch online public registry homepage at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/eal/registries/index.html>.