

Environmental Management Systems

Environmental Management System

Yorkshire Water operates an Environmental Management System (EMS).

The Environment Agency (2006) defines an EMS as;

"a structured, documented approach to managing a business's environmental performance and responsibilities".

Simply, it is a tool for identifying and managing the impact of the company on the environment and for increasing business efficiency.

Our Environmental Commitments

Our Environmental Policy provides the framework for our EMS, setting Yorkshire Water's corporate commitments to environmental issues. As well as the commitments outlined in the environmental policy the company also has four environmental performance vision statements:

- We achieve 100% compliance with legal and regulatory obligations;
- We go beyond compliance when we believe the benefit exceeds the cost;
- We proactively conserve and enhance the environment;
- We enjoy a constructive relationship with our regulators and stakeholders.

A key element of any successful EMS is the identification of an organisation's environmental aspects. ISO 14001 defines an 'environmental aspect' as 'an element of an organisations activities, products and services that can interact with the environment'. After a thorough investigation of Yorkshire Water's activities approximately 50 significant environmental aspects have been identified from a list of approximately 300 aspects (both positive and negative). The environmental policy commitments, vision statements, and identified significant aspects are closely linked to our environmental objectives and targets. These objectives and targets enable the organisation to focus on continual environmental improvement from both a strategic and day to day operational level.

Benefits of an EMS

As mentioned previously an EMS is a valuable tool for identifying and managing an organisation's environmental impacts. Having a certified EMS system operating throughout Yorkshire Water has delivered the following benefits:

- Helped to drive environmental efficiencies
- Increased workforce environmental awareness through training
- Identified key environmental aspects and impacts
- Improved process control and environmental monitoring
- Assisted with progression towards future self regulation
- Moved us towards our Vision Statement to be 'Clearly the Best'
- Improved our environmental benchmarking scores
- Increased competitive advantage for commercial bids
- Enhanced our public image

Yorkshire Water's EMS – Recertified in May 2007

Yorkshire Water achieved company wide certification to ISO14001 in April 2004, covering 'the provision of sustainable water, sewerage and waste management services'. We are subject to 6-monthly surveillance audits by an external consultant to verify our compliance with ISO14001.

The YW EMS involves every person, at every level and function in Yorkshire Water. Most of this involvement is through 'business as usual' activities such as ensuring that we have operational control over our assets and limiting their environmental impact. Over 95% of our 2,200 employees have undergone environmental awareness training.

We have also identified over 80 'environmental representatives' across the business, who have been trained to handle environmental queries from their teams, liaise with the Environmental Affairs Team and carry out 'checklist' based internal audits.

In addition, a team of internal EMS auditors have been trained to carry out full environmental audits on our sites, initially concentrating on sites with identified significant environmental aspects. All corrective actions identified at the time of the audit are logged on our EMS audit database EnAct and followed up for action.

For further information on the EMS, please contact the Environmental Affairs team.