

APPENDIX V – 3: COMPLAINT AND INVESTIGATION PROCESS FOR DEPARTMENT ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Environmental complaints are reported to the Department’s Enforcement Section from a variety of sources including:

- Telephone calls from citizens
- Emergency reporting center notifications
- Referrals from programs within DNREC
- Referrals from other governmental entities
- Generated by officers during pro-patrol
- Self-reporting of violations/incidents by the regulated community
- Written and electronic correspondence
- In person from citizens

These complaints and notifications are divided into two categories, priority and non-priority. The prioritization table assists the on call staff in determining escalating or de-escalating an incident. All complaints regardless of ranking are ultimately investigated by the Department, or referred to other agencies.

Priority Complaints	Non-Priority Complaints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for Environmental Response Team activation. • Actual or potential major spills and/or releases • Incidents involving a significant threat/impact to public safety or the environment • Abandoned drums or containers • Infectious/medical waste complaints • Requests for response by an emergency reporting center, police departments, fire departments, the Coast Guard, or other Governmental Agencies • Complaints on facilities where specific response protocols have been outlined • In-progress complaints in which un-permitted activities are occurring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential open burning • Solid waste and theft of services dumping that are not in progress • Sewage discharge and sanitary sewer overflow complaints • Checks on permitted industries or individuals • Requests for background checks • Outdoor odor complaints that are below action levels • Permit violations, not in progress

The majority of the complaints and notifications received by the Department’s Enforcement Section are received on the Section’s 24-hour contact lines. The numbers are:

Toll free, in state only: 1-800-662-8802
 Out of state: 1-302-739-5072

The phones are answered by two different systems:

- During normal business hours Enforcement Section Staff answers the phones.
- After hours, the phones may be answered by the Department's electronic call taking system or the Kent County 911 Center.

Callers will be required to leave the following information, so that proper investigation can occur.

- Date and time of call
- Name of caller, or company affiliation
- Call back numbers (home and work)
- Date and time of incident
- Nature of incident
- Materials released or discharged
- Location of incident (include county)
- Suspect information
- Any other relevant information

The following chart portrays what happens to a complaint once DNREC Environmental Officers receive it.

**Department Enforcement Section
Enforcement Action Flow Chart**

