



## COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was established on June 5, 1996, under the Environmental Protection Act, Cap. 20:05, Laws of Guyana, to oversee the effective management, conservation, protection and improvement of the environment.

The Act requires the Agency to take the necessary measures to ensure the prevention and control of pollution. In doing so, addressing environmental violations is integral to the work of the Agency; these usually occur in the form of environmental complaints. It is the responsibility of everyone to identify and report poor environmental practices. Therefore, complaint management is a vital aspect of environmental and human health protection.

In accordance with Part V, Section. 19 (1) (a) of the Environmental Protection Act, Cap. 20:05, Laws of Guyana – “a person shall not undertake an activity that causes or is likely to cause pollution of the environment, unless the person takes all reasonable and practicable measures to prevent or minimize any resulting adverse effect”.

### **Addressing environmental complaints**

The Environmental Protection Agency continues to receive a large number of complaints related to various environmental nuisances. This steady increase has placed additional pressure on the Agency’s resources to have them addressed in a timely manner. In this regard, the Agency has developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for expeditiously and efficiently addressing environmental complaints. The SoP provides for the complaints to be managed by a single hub, which will enable the Agency to track the status of any complaint at a given time and provide accurate updates.

The Agency in 2019, received 571 complaints while in 2020 a total of 581 complaints were received. The majority of the complaints were related to noise, odor and improper waste disposal, from residential agriculture, spray painting, mechanic workshops, lumberyards, and furniture manufacturers.

### **A collaborative approach**

The Agency’s work enables Guyana to contribute to global and national environmental protection and conservation. As such, the Agency’s approach to complaints management allows for the Agency to collaborate with other key organisations to eliminate complaints backlog and bring resolution to many of the recurrent complaint matters. Given the many challenges we face especially in this new COVID- 19 pandemic, and adhering to the restrictions has limited the Agency time of response. Agencies such as the Local Government, Neighbourhood Democratic Councils, Regional Democratic Council, Guyana Forestry Commission, the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, Central Housing and Planning Authority have over the years assisted the Agency in resolving many complaint matters.

## **Standard Operating Procedure for Complaints management**

You too can assist the Agency

Members of the public can report environmental complaints utilising any of the following methods:

- Complaints 24-Hour Hotline Number: 592-225-5469; or
- E-mail: [complaint@epaguyana.org](mailto:complaint@epaguyana.org).

Please note, complaint reports MUST include:

- i. Nature of the complaint;
- ii. Name and address of business/entity/person causing the pollution;
- iii. Name of the complainant (person making the complaint); and
- iv. Contact information and address of complainant.

You can also message us on Facebook or Instagram.

Complaints can also be made to our Regional Offices in Whim, Berbice and McKenzie, Linden:

2. Whim Office – 337-2201; and
3. Linden Office – 444-2313.

Remember your first line of action should be to make contact with your local government authority (Regional Democratic Council/Neighbourhood Democratic Council) on the matter.

Please be assured the Agency will treat all information received from the public with strictest confidence. Complainants, however, should be willing to attend court and testify should the matter require legal action.

***You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: “Our Earth, Our Environment”, C/O ECEA Programme, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: [eit.epaguyana@gmail.com](mailto:eit.epaguyana@gmail.com). Follow us on Facebook and Instagram and subscribe to our YouTube channel.***