

Permitting of Industrial and Commercial Projects

What is an Environmental Permit?

The Environment Agency—Abu Dhabi (EAD), in coordination with the Higher Corporation for Specialized Economic Zones (ZonesCorp), issues environmental permits to facilities involved in industrial activities. The environmental permit is designed to ensure that industrial facilities implement the necessary measures to minimise and mitigate potential environmental impacts during the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases. Commercial and light industrial facilities are permitted directly by EAD.

When is it required?

An environmental permit must be obtained prior to construction of a new industrial or commercial facility or prior to additions or modifications to an existing facility. There are two types of environmental permits for industrial and commercial developments—construction permits and operating permits—each of which must be obtained prior to commencing the respective phase of work. The permits are renewed annually to ensure compliance with the permit conditions and to ensure that the permit is updated to reflect the current operations at the facility.

Why is it required?

Federal Law No. 24 of 1999 for the Protection and Development of the Environment requires that all projects or establishments obtain a license (i.e., environmental permit) prior to starting an activity. As the competent authority for implementation of Federal Law No. 24 within the Abu Dhabi Emirate, EAD is responsible for permitting of facilities with commercial licenses or light industrial facilities. ZonesCorp is the designated authority for permitting of facilities with an industrial license.

Who applies for it?

The environmental permit application should be completed by the proponent or an EAD-approved consultant who is engaged by the proponent. The permit application must be submitted to either EAD Customer Service (for commercial and light industrial facilities) or through the ZonesCorp One-Stop-Shop Web site (for industrial facilities).

What happens next?

Upon submission of the environmental permit application, the designated authority will review the application and notify the proponent if an environmental assessment is required. Depending on the type and scale of the facility, requested studies may include a Preliminary Environmental Review, an Environmental Impact Assessment, a Strategic Environmental Assessment, or a Construction or Operating Environmental Management Plan. The environmental study must be completed by an EAD-approved consultant and be submitted to EAD for review. Once the study is approved, an environmental permit for either construction or operation will be issued, at which time the proponent may commence activities on site, subject to the conditions stipulated in the permit.

To renew an environmental permit, a request for renewal must be submitted to either EAD or ZonesCorp, as appropriate. If the proponent has provided any requested environmental reports and no violations have been recorded during site inspections, the renewal is usually granted without further action on the part of the proponent. Otherwise, EAD or ZonesCorp may contact the proponent for more information or conduct an inspection prior to issuing the permit renewal. If inadequate or no action has been taken to correct violations, the permit may be revoked or may be conditionally approved pending further corrective action.

Further information?

For further information, refer to the *Standard Operating Procedure for Permitting of Industrial, Commercial, and Light Industrial Projects in Abu Dhabi*, visit the EAD or ZonesCorp Web sites, or contact EAD Customer Service.