

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND YOU

PETROCHEMICAL PLANTS



CAG

Citizen consumer and civic Action Group

1. What are the pollution problems associated with petrochemical plants?

Petrochemical plants pose a variety of environmental due to disposal of wastes, accidents etc.

2. What kind of solid wastes are generated by Petrochemical plants?

Petrochemical plants generate solid wastes or sludges which are hazardous because of the presence of toxic organics and heavy metals.

3. Why are accidents in petrochemical plants dangerous to environment?

Accidents especially from polyethylene and ethylene oxide glycol plants in a petrochemical complex can be an environmental hazard releasing large quantities of pollutants and products into the environment.

4. What are the components of waste water released from the petrochemical plants?

Waste water released by petrochemical industries are characterized by the presence of large quantities of polycyclic, and aromatic hydrocarbons, phenols, metal derivatives, surface active substances, sulphides, naphthylenic acids and other chemicals. Ineffective treatment may thus cause a serious problem as it will lead to accumulation of toxic products in the receiving water bodies.

5. What are the damages caused by water pollution in the petrochemical plants?

The damage caused by oil may range from destruction of ecology due to death of flora and fauna. Sulphides, mercaptans and phenols and toxic and taste and odour producing substances and destroy fish and other aquatic organisms in a receiving water course. They may also cause serious impacts on downstream sources of water.

6. What is the impact of petrochemical industry on air quality?

Petroleum industries contribute severely to air pollution. The air pollutants are smoke, particulate matter, hydrocarbons, oxides of sulphur and nitrogen, carbon monoxide, and malodorous emissions. They may arise from storage areas, individual processes, operations, leakage and the use of fuel for production of the refinery's own heat and power.

7. How are these Environment Impacts of predicted and mitigated?

The owner of the project has to conduct a study that predicts the potential environment impacts of the project and suggests methods to mitigate the same, before the project is established. This process, called the Environment Impact Assessment is mandated by the MoEF, the nodal agency for all environment related issues in the country.

8. Who prepares an EIA report?

The project proponent prepares the EIA report. It is mostly done by the consultants appointed by the project proponent.

9. What do I do if I am affected by the project?

The EIA report is prepared based on the Terms of Reference given by the Impact Assessment Authority. After the preparation of this document, people affected by the project are called to participate and share their concerns about the project. This process is called 'public consultation'. It ensures the participation of local people and stakeholders in various developmental activities.

10. How can I participate in a public consultation process?

You can participate in a public consultation process by: a. expressing your concerns through written responses and/ or b. by directly participating in a public hearing that will be held in your district.

11. What documents should be made available to me to understand how the impacts of the proposed project ?

The impacts of the project, will be given in the EIA Report. An executive summary containing the salient features of the project and the entire report itself, both in English and the local language should be made available to you as soon as a public consultation is called for.

12. Where will these documents be available?

The executive summary can be perused in the following offices:

- a. District Collector Office
- b. Office of Chief Executive officer of Zila Parishad
or
- c. Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation/local
body
- d. HO of the State pollution control Board and
regional office
- e. Concerned department of the state government
dealing with the subject of environment

You can also get your own copy of it by paying a nominal charge.

13. Where will a copy of the entire EIA report be available?

The complete EIA report is made available for reference at Ministry's office in Delhi (Paryavaran, Bhavan, C.G.O Complex, New Delhi 110 003)

A comprehensive EIA report takes 1 year to prepare. So project proponent may furnish Rapid EIA report to the IAA based on one season data (other than monsoon) for examination of the project. Comprehensive EIA can be submitted later if requested by IAA.

IAA can also give exemption to the project proponent if the project is unlikely to cause significant impact on the environment. When exemption is granted project proponent may be asked to furnish additional information as required.

The Details of the project and findings of the EIA study should be made available to concerned parties or environmental groups by the project proponent.

14. How do I submit a written Response on perusing the EIA report?

After reading the EIA report and understanding the impacts of the project, you can express your views, comments, suggestions and objections to the SPCB within 30 days from the date of publication of the notification for the public hearing.

Even if you are not directly affected by the proposed project you can send written comments and responses.

15. How do I participate in a public Hearing

While it is essential for written responses to be submitted it is also critical that all the people affected by the project attend the public hearing. It is organized by the concerned state pollution control Board (SPCB) or the Union territory Pollution Control Board to enable widest possible public participation. It is advisable to submit comments in the form of written responses even at the Public Hearing.

16. How will I know when the public hearing will be held?

The PCB should announce a date for the public hearing in:

- a. one major national daily
- b. one regional vernacular daily

This notice should appear 30 days before the date of the public hearing.

17. Who can attend a public hearing?

All residents of the area environmental groups, and other person located at the project site/sites and affected by the project can participate in a public hearing. Persons who are likely to be affected by the undertaking the project may include

- a. any person who might be affected if the proposed project gets clearance
- b. the proponent of the project project

- c. any person who is not affected by the proposed project but a part of group working for environmental well being in that locality.
- d. local authority within whose limits, the project is proposed is to be located.

18. Who will form the panel for public hearing?

The following people will constitute the public hearing panel:

- a. Representative from SPCB
- b. Representative of state govt dealing with environment
- c. District collector or his nominee,
- d. Representatives of local bodies such as municipalities or panchayat
- e. Three senior citizens of the area nominated by the district collector

19. Where should the public hearing be held?

The venue of the public hearing should be fixed either at the site of the proposed project or at the office of gram panchayat of the concerned village. If the project is located in more than one district/ State then separate hearing is required for each district/ State. If the venue that has been chosen is not convenient for the project affected people to attend, written request must be made to the SPCB demanding a change in venue.

20. Who should preside over the public hearing and what should be the quorum for the hearing?

The EIA notification states that only the District Magistrate (same as District Collector) or his/her authorized representative not below the rank of the Assistant District Magistrate shall supervise the public hearing. They will be assisted by the representative of SPCB. The public hearing cannot take place if atleast half the members prescribed panel and officers from SPCB and the Department of Environment and Forests and three senior citizens are not present.

21. How is a public hearing conducted?

The public hearing should begin with a presentation by the project proponent on the proposed project and summary of draft report. The presentation should detail the social and environmental impacts of the project.

Every person present at the venue should be given opportunity to ask information and clarifications from the project proponent.

22. How will the public hearing be officially documented?

- a. The proceedings should be officially minuted.
- b. The authorities should video film the proceedings.
- c. Person participating in the hearing can arrange for their own filming of the process.
- d. Objections raised by the people should be included in the minutes.
- e. The minutes have to be read to all persons present at the hearing before being accepted. The contents should be explained in the local language.
- f. The reason for denying permission to other than local people to talk should be minuted.

23. What happens after the public consultation?

After the public consultation,

- a. Official minutes of the meeting should be displayed prominently. It should be displayed at the concerned panchayat office, Zilla Parishad, District Magistrate Office and the PCB
- b. The minutes should include..
 - i. All issues raised by the public.
 - ii. Comments and commitments made by project proponent/representative
 - iii. In English and vernacular language.
 - iv. Include full list of all the people who attended the hearing.
- c. Video or the CD of the public hearing should be annexed to the minutes. d. If it differs from the minutes read out during public hearing, then write to all the officials concerned and MoEF. State clearly the problem with the minutes.

24. Who gives the Environmental clearance?

The proceedings of the hearing has to be forwarded to the regulatory authority-MoEF for category A project and State level Impact Assessment Agency for category B projects.

25. What is the duration of validity of the clearance?

Environmental clearance once granted is valid for 5 years. From commencement of the Construction or operation of the project.

26. How will I know whether the proposed project is given clearance?

The status of the environmental clearance is to be made available in the website of MoEF. This can also be obtained from the MoEF's regional office.

27. Where do I appeal against the grant of Environmental clearance?

Appeals can be made before the National Environmental Appellate Authority (NEAA) in New Delhi as per the NEAA Act, 1977.

*This booklet was prepared
as a part of :*

The Civil Society Collaboration
for Environmental Governance,
an initiative of WWF-India,
New Delhi



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