

HOST MUNICIPALITY INSPECTOR PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Established in 1990 under the authorities of the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act ([Act 101](#)) and the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act ([Act 108](#)), the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Host Municipality Inspector (HMI) Program has trained and certified hundreds of people from around the state to serve as host municipality inspectors (HMIs). HMIs are authorized to inspect local municipal waste landfills, resource recovery facilities and commercial hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities in their communities. HMIs provide an independent evaluation of the waste operation and voice the host municipality's priorities. Host municipalities are eligible to receive reimbursement from DEP for 50 percent of the approved expenses to employ up to two HMIs. More than \$9.3 million has been reimbursed to participating municipalities since the program's inception.

GETTING INVOLVED

To get involved in the HMI Program, a host municipality must nominate an individual to participate in a training session offered by DEP. A "host municipality" is any municipality, other than the county, where a [municipal waste](#) landfill, resource recovery facility or commercial [hazardous waste](#) treatment, storage or disposal facility is located. To nominate an individual to participate in training, please contact the Program Development Section of the Bureau of Waste Management via the contact information provided in the "For more information" section below.

Overview of Training

The training program provides the prospective HMI with the technical knowledge and interpersonal skills to address the host municipality's needs. The first part of the training consists of background on solid wastes, science, groundwater principles, sampling, environmental data and safety. The second phase of the training goes into detail on design, engineering, operational, permitting and regulatory requirements. The goal is to provide HMIs with a link between the types and sources of environmental impacts from eligible waste operations and the design, engineering and operating requirements to control these impacts. The final part of the training involves inspection techniques, interpersonal skills and tools to achieve results.

What happens after DEP trains and certifies a host municipality inspector?

After being certified, the HMI may begin conducting inspections, taking samples and reviewing facility records. DEP encourages new HMIs to accompany a DEP inspector for their first few inspections. This is an excellent way for site-specific information to be quickly conveyed to new HMIs, and it is a "hands-on" way of learning how to conduct inspections.

Under Act 101, HMIs have the authority to order a municipal waste landfill or resource recovery facility to cease any activity that is an immediate threat to public health and safety and is a violation of the Solid Waste Management Act, regulation or permit authorization. Unless the HMI notifies DEP and the host municipality, any order will expire two hours after issuance. An order issued by the HMI may also be superseded by DEP. HMIs for commercial hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities do not have the authority to issue cease orders.

HMIs have the ability to trigger a DEP inspection. Whenever a host municipality presents information that gives DEP reason to believe that a facility is in violation of the Clean Streams Law, the Air Pollution Control Act, the Dam Safety and Encroachments Act, the Solid Waste Management Act or the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act, DEP is required to promptly conduct an inspection of the facility.

HMIs must periodically be retrained due to changes in the municipal and hazardous waste management industry and Pennsylvania regulations. DEP periodically conducts statewide HMI meetings and training sessions to update inspectors of commercial hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities on such changes. HMIs for municipal waste landfills and resource recovery facilities must complete a DEP-sponsored advanced training course every three years and conduct at least one inspection per calendar year to maintain their certification.

Can a host municipality inspector issue notices of violation and citations, or assess penalties?

Only if the municipality first adopts DEP's regulations. The host municipality then would need to authorize or empower the HMI to take enforcement action similar to a code enforcement officer and review the procedures with their solicitor.

How is a participating host municipality reimbursed by DEP?

At the end of every calendar year, DEP provides an annual program update to all host municipalities that have certified host municipality inspectors. This update includes information on the availability of the reimbursement application in the Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Electronic Single Application (ESA) system. Once available, host municipalities need to complete and submit the application and supporting documentation in ESA by the indicated due date, usually March 31. DEP processes the applications in the order in which they are received. Unless there are problems with an application, reimbursements can usually be expected within eight to twelve weeks.

Do host municipality inspectors work for DEP?

No. All HMIs work directly for their host municipality. However, they also could work for contractors, other municipalities, county governments or private companies, and they may even be retirees serving in a volunteer capacity. All HMIs fall under the authority and supervision of the host municipality. The host municipality has the final say on who gets hired and retained as an HMI, in addition to decisions concerning pay and work hours.

If my community has a host municipality inspector, does that mean DEP no longer has to conduct inspections?

No. DEP employees will perform their required inspections regardless of whether a host municipality employs an HMI. HMIs simply provide local municipalities an additional inspection tool.

For more information:

For any questions about the HMI Program, please contact the Program Development and Support Section of the [Bureau of Waste Management](#) at 717-783-2388, or RA-EPWasteProgramDev@pa.gov.

Additional information is available at www.dep.pa.gov, keyword: Host Municipality Inspector.