Ontario Air and Noise Best Practices

Topic	**Application Priority**	Date: June 3, 2009 Version 1.1
Purpose	**To identify types of projects that are eligible for priority review from the Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch**	**Page 1 of 2**

The Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch (EAAB) is responsible for reviewing applications for approval of facilities under the *Environmental Protection Act* (EPA), the *Ontario Water Resources Act* (OWRA) and related environmental legislation. Applications are processed in chronological order upon receipt following the process outlined in Figure 1 of the Guide to Applying for Approval (Air and Noise).

Applicants may request priority assignment to a reviewer in limited cases based on specific government initiatives which include:

- importance to the provincial energy supply;
- provincially significant new waste management capacity;
- economic development; and
- equipment/processes that would significantly reduce the environmental footprint of a facility or are part of an abatement plan.

Upon receipt, applications that meet these criteria will be assigned to reviewer as a priority and the input from internal ministry comments will be coordinated by EAAB to ensure timely response. Applications that do not meet these criteria will not be assigned to a reviewer on a priority basis.

Applicants requesting priority for a project that fits one of the above categories must preconsult with the Ministry. The preconsultation should include both the local District Office of the Ministry and the EAAB. In order to get priority status an applicant must get the concurrence of the EAAB.

The Ministry will not assign a priority to applications that are incomplete and are not supported by documentation demonstrating compliance. Incomplete applications may be returned.

Practitioners with priority applications are expected to provide timely responses to requests for information from the Ministry in order to maintain the priority status.

The Environmental Bill of Rights requires minimum public notification times on the Environmental Registry. The EAAB can not process applications faster than these timing requirements. Furthermore, the Ministry will take the time necessary to address concerns raised by the public through the EBR process. To ensure a timely process, applicants should incorporate measures to address anticipated public concerns into their applications. Practitioners will consider meaningful communication with the public as a way to facilitate a timely resolution to public concerns. For more information on these requirements refer document 3323e titled *"The Requirements Of The Environmental Bill Of Rights For Prescribed Instruments: Guide For Applicants for EPA s.9 EPA s.27 EPA s.46 OWRA s.34 and OWRA s.53 Applications (November 1994)"* on the Ministry Website.

In the event that an Applicant has more than one complete application in the queue awaiting assignment and the more recent application is more urgent for the company they may request that EAAB swap the files in the queue to move up the more urgent application.

Practitioners will highlight applications that meet specific government initiatives and will work with the EAAB to allow these applications to be processed in the most efficient manner possible.

Note: Incomplete applications are not eligible for priority.

If further assistance is required please contact the Air and /or Noise Duty Officers at the Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch at 1-800-461-6290.