



N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service N.C. Environmental Stewardship Initiative



www.ncesi.org

N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) is designed to promote and encourage superior environmental performance in North Carolina. ESI is a voluntary program administered by the Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) and is available at no cost. This program seeks to reduce the impact on the environment beyond measures required by any permit or rule, producing a better environment, conserving natural resources and resulting in long-term economic benefits.

As part of the ESI program, DEACS staff provide organizations with technical assistance and advise them on strategies to reduce their water and energy usage. ESI members, including businesses and others, are required to institute a performance-based system to achieve their environmental goals.

Training

Environmental Management Systems

DEACS staff members host regular trainings so ESI members can learn how to put in place a performance-based environmental management system (EMS) to achieve their environmental goals. Formal environmental management systems (EMS) training is scheduled based on member interest. This is a series of seven one-day modules in a group setting that provides information and exercises based on ISO 14001:2015. At the end of the series, members will have the framework to implement an EMS in their organization.

Internal Auditor Training

This one-day training begins by providing auditing techniques and ends by carrying out a mock audit to practice these new skills.

EMS ISO 14001:2015 Overview

The ESI developed the ISO 14001:2015 EMS Overview Course to help facilities who need to improve their Environmental Management System, bring new employees up to speed, or for any organization interested in learning more about the standard.



Coaches

Every ESI member is assigned a coach, who serves as a single point of contact and can provide technical and programmatic assistance. The coaches are engineers, chemists and environmental specialists on staff in DEACS.

Benefits

- Networking opportunities
- Electronic newsletter
- Access to free training and webinars
- EMS assistance
- Coaches
- Annual ESI conference
- Recognition awards
- Opportunity to meet with N.C. DEQ senior management



Technical Services

- Technical and compliance assistance
- Waste, water, energy assistance
- Personalized on-site EMS assistance
- EMS gap analysis
- Internal audit assistance
- Waste sort assistance
- Facilitation assistance



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Which Level is Right for You?

Members can enter the Environmental Stewardship Initiative program at one of three levels. Partners are considered the beginners in the program. Rising Stewards are a bit more advanced and must meet more stringent criteria. Stewards have achieved the most superior environmental performance.

Partner

The Partner level is designed for a broad range of organizations interested in beginning the process of developing a systematic approach to improving their environmental performance.

Partners must:

- Demonstrate commitment to compliance;
- Set environmental performance goals; and
- Agree to report annually.



ESI Partner, Cape Fear Public Utility Authority, conducted a waste sort to educate employees on recyclable items that can be diverted from landfill disposal.

Rising Steward

The Rising Steward level is designed for organizations that have a mature environmental management system (EMS). Rising Environmental Stewards must meet the Partner level criteria plus:

- Demonstrate a mature EMS;
- Set measurable environmental performance goals; and
- Demonstrate a commitment to go beyond compliance.



Mecklenburg County Solid Waste, an ESI Rising Steward, hosted ESI members for a training on internal auditing of environmental management systems.

Steward

The Steward level is for organizations that already display a commitment to exemplary environmental performance beyond what is required by law.

Environmental Stewards must also demonstrate:

- Aggressive environmental performance goals;
- Commitment to meet and go beyond compliance;
- EMS is integrated into the core business functions; and
- Process of communicating with the local community about program activities and progress toward performance goals.



ESI Environmental Steward, Pfizer in Sanford, maintains beehives and an herb garden managed by their green team for use in their company café.

ESI Members Achieved

1,545,713

Tons of recycled material collected.

15.9 Billion gallons of water saved.

4.3 Million tons of landfilled waste reduced.

87.3 Billion Btus of electricity saved.

105.3 Million dollars saved on projects.

4,688 Tons of hazardous waste reduced.

Based on self-reported data from 2004-2020

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