
Regulatory Database Sources

Overview

Freedom of Information Act Requests

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can be contacted in writing to provide regulatory database information under the Texas Open Records and Freedom of Information Act, respectively. TCEQ and EPA have 10 days to determine if the requested information does not fall within an exception that prohibits disclosure. Once determined to be releasable, there is no minimum time period in which the information must be provided. This approach to obtaining regulatory information will typically not be practical except for requests on an individual site basis or for electronic or printed copy requests of databases for the entire state or a particular county.

Requests are to be made to:

Freedom of Information Officer, EPA Region 6, 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, TX 75202-2733, TEL: 214/665-6597, FAX: 214/655-2146, E-mail: r6foia@epa.gov

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), ATTN: Public Information Officer, MC-197, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087, TEL: 512/239-3282, FAX: 512/239-0888 E-mail: openrecs@tceq.state.tx.us

Regulatory Agency Data Requests

Some state databases or standardized reports are available from TCEQ's Customer Reports and Services Section. Although TCEQ treats all requests equally, there should be no charge for computer services, shipping and staff services for routine requests since TxDOT is a state agency.

Commercial Vendors

Commercial vendors or information brokers provide list searches of environmental agency databases. These list searches may be a more practical source of regulatory database information especially for many high population density or industrial areas. Typically, a project-specific list search from a commercial vendor includes summary tables and maps locating the sites within a minimum search distance. At TxDOT, this information can be obtained through a contracted purchase of service. District purchasing staff should be contacted for specific contracting and purchase procedures.

Environmental Consultants

A list search of regulatory databases can also be obtained under the statewide environmental engineering consultant contracts. Consultants typically subcontract the list search from commercial vendors, as discussed above. Unless other engineering services are to be included, statewide consultant contracts may not be the most efficient way to contract for a list search. Although these subcontracted list search services are not marked up, additional administrative and review hours will most likely be invoiced by the consultant. However, if the project limits are very long and/or have many commercial or industrial properties, a district may decide that there is a need for a consultant to facilitate the regulatory database review and make recommendations. For more information on the statewide environmental consultants, contact the Contract Services Office.

World Wide Web

Queries of some regulatory databases are available from EPA and TCEQ web pages. These queries cannot quite duplicate the accuracy or mapping capability of commercial vendors at this time. The following is just a summary of the available queries since more information and instructions can be found at the individual web site:

TCEQ's LPST Query (<http://www.tnrcc.state.tx.us/waste/pst/rpr/pstquery.htm>) (<http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/remed/rpr/pstquery.htm>): The Leaking Petroleum Storage Tanks (LPST) database can be queried using the LPST identification number to obtain the essential information about LPST, or perform a search by either county, city, street & city, facility identification, or company, or both using full or partial names for the company and/or city. A search will return a list of LPST numbers with the company name, street address, and city. The resulting output page can be printed for reference. One can then return to this query page and search for detailed information by the LPST identification number. The information provided consists of discovery and reporting dates, priority and status, the initials of TCEQ case coordinator(s) if the case has been assigned, the responsible party, location, whether or not it is a federal facility, county and county number, pre-approval information, and the TCEQ region number and city.

EPA's Envirofacts Query (http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/ef_query.html): Envirofacts is a relational database that integrates data extracted from a number of major facility or site-based EPA program systems, such as AIRS/AFS, CERCLIS, GICS, ICR, NCOD, PCS, RCRAInfo, RCRIS, and TRIS using two integrating databases: FRS and EMCI. It also incorporates location information from Envirofacts' locational reference tables to integrate these systems. The multi-system Envirofacts query form can be used to obtain an integrated report of the facility based databases or used to query the databases individually to find detailed information.

EPA's Maps on Demand (<http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/mod/index.html>): The SiteInfo application creates informative maps and reports, such as EPA-regulated facility, demographic, and safe drinking water information for areas surrounding any given location in the United States by providing a latitude/longitude coordinate.

The results of Envirofacts queries can now be mapped using the new Query Mapper application. This tool is valuable to users who are interested in mapping facility locations and viewing the surrounding demographics, Geographic Retrieval and Analysis System (GIRAS) land use and land cover, as well as physical and cultural features.

The ZipInfo application creates informative maps and reports, such as EPA-regulated facility, demographics, and safe drinking water information for areas within any given ZIP code in the United States.

The CountyInfo application creates informative maps and reports, such as EPA-regulated facility, demographics, and safe drinking water information for areas within any given county in the United States.