

Chapter 106. Valdez Principles¹

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106.001 Introduction

- (a) By adopting these principlesC, we publicly affirm our belief that governmental entities and their employees have a direct responsibility for the environment. We believe that governmental entities must conduct their business as responsible stewards of the environment and take actions only in a manner that leaves the Earth healthy and safe. We believe that governmental entities must not compromise the ability of future generations to sustain their needs.
- (b) We recognize this to be a long term commitment to update our practices continually in light of advances in technology and new understandings in health and environmental science. We intend to make consistent, measurable progress in implementing these principles and to apply them wherever we operate.

106.002 Protection of the Biosphere

- (a) We will minimize and strive to eliminate the release of any pollutant that may cause environmental damage to air, water, or earth or its inhabitants.
- (b) We will safeguard habitats in rivers, lakes, and wetlands, and will minimize contributing to global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, acid rain or smog.

106.003 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

- (a) We will make sustainable use of renewable natural resources, such as water, soils and woodlands.

¹ Chapter 106 was adopted 3/28/1995, Item #3.

- (b) We will conserve nonrenewable natural resources through efficient use and careful planning.
- (c) We will protect wildlife habitat, open spaces and natural areas while preserving biodiversity.

106.004 Reduction and Disposal of Waste

- (a) We will minimize the creation of waste, especially hazardous waste, and wherever possible recycle materials.
- (b) We will dispose of all wastes through safe and responsible methods.

106.005 Wise Use of Energy

- (a) We will make every effort to use environmentally safe and sustainable energy sources to meet our needs.
- (b) We will invest in improved energy efficiency and conservation in our operations.
- (c) We will maximize the energy efficiency of products we use.

106.006 Risk Reduction

- (a) We will minimize the environmental, health and safety risks to our employees and the communities in which we operate by employing safe technologies and operating procedures and by being constantly prepared for emergencies.

106.007 Environmentally Sensitive Service Delivery

- (a) We will deliver services that minimize adverse environmental impacts.
- (b) We will inform the public of the impacts of our services.

106.008 Damage Compensation

We will take responsibility for any harm we cause to the environment by making every effort to fully restore the environment and to compensate those persons who are adversely affected.

106.009 Disclosure

- (a) We will disclose to our employees and to the public incidents relating to our operations that cause environmental harm or pose health or safety hazards.
- (b) We will disclose potential environmental, health or safety hazards posed by our operations, and we will not take any action against employees who report any condition that creates a danger to the environment or poses health and safety hazards.

106.010 Environmental Executives

- (a) At least one member of the Executive Staff will be a person qualified to represent environmental interests.
- (b) We will commit management resources to implement these Principles, including the funding of an executive position dealing with environmental affairs, reporting directly to the Commissioners' Court to monitor and report upon our implementation efforts.

106.011 Assessment and Annual Audit

- (a) We will conduct and make public an annual self-evaluation of our progress in implementing these principles and in complying with all applicable laws and regulations throughout our operations.
- (b) We will work toward the timely creation of independent environmental audit procedures which we will complete annually and make available to the public.

106.012 Examples of Valdez Principles in County Government

- (a) Protection of the Biosphere
 - (1) Stop using Styrofoam products made of ozone-depleting CFCs; and/or phase out the use of Styrofoam altogether.
 - (2) Don't use beef in our cafeterias if it was raised in Latin American areas where the rain forest was depleted.
 - (3) Also, emphasize buying biodegradable products as much as possible.
- (b) Sustainable Use of Natural Resources
 - (1) Use water conservation measures and devices.
 - (2) Use Integrated Pest Management as much as possible, instead of the traditional reliance on chemical pesticides and herbicides.
 - (3) Have a tree replacement policy for trees destroyed in road building and other development projects.
- (c) Reduction and Disposal of Waste
 - (1) Recycling of materials in the workplace: cans and paper, oil, batteries, and to the extent feasible, bottles.
 - (2) Develop a comprehensive recycling plan based on a waste stream evaluation, instead of the patchwork approach we currently have.
 - (3) Use recycled paper as much as possible, especially on letterhead.
- (d) Wise Use of Energy
 - (1) Have energy audits on all County buildings, and update those that have been done.

- (2) In addition to the audits, policy should reflect that we should buy energy efficient equipment, make it part of the bid specification.

(e) Risk Reduction

- (1) Conduct a risk management study which includes hazardous material exposures.
- (2) Designate "safety officers" in key departments.
- (3) Require pesticide and hazardous material training for key personnel. Key Parks Department Staff have already been trained and certified.
- (4) Properly dispose of hazardous materials, and route hazardous materials away from water bodies and recharge zones as much as possible.

(f) Environmentally Sensitive Service Delivery

- (1) Use erosion/sedimentation controls and other environmental protection measures as needed, on roadways and construction projects.
- (2) Reduce herbicide and fertilizer use. Use tree protection measures, WQ basins, hazardous material traps, and other measures as warranted.

(g) Damage Compensation

- (1) Basically one can reduce liability by intelligent environmental planning.
- (2) If mistakes are made, properly mitigate the problem and compensate "victims."

(h) Disclosure

- (1) In addition to working with the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), have a centralized office for hazardous material inventorying and reporting.
- (2) Information about hazardous materials present should be placed in the work place, with easy access by staff or the public.

(i) Environmental Executives

This would mean not only the Environmental Analyst/Officer position that has already been created, but also environmental staff in key departments: PITD, Health, Parks and EMS.

(j) Assessment and Annual Audit

- (1) This would include the development of a compliance and rating system that would monitor implementation.
- (2) The audit/report could be attached in the Yearly Report for the Environmental Officer.