

## Overview of Ohio EPA Virtual Site Visits

Part of Ohio EPA's core mission is to ensure compliance with environmental laws and regulations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been effectively working with virtual tools and technology.

As we optimize our use of various technology tools, the Agency is now exploring opportunities to use these tools in the field through virtual site visits (VSV). In the near term, our ability to expand our field presence with these tools will allow us to continue collecting important information from our regulated entities while also protecting against the potential spread of COVID-19. In the longer-term, adding the use of virtual tools to the Agency's compliance toolkit, both from a compliance inspection and assistance standpoint, can help us reach even more facilities because of the efficiencies gained in reducing travel time, etc.

The Agency will pilot the use of VSVs for select categories of inspections (routine, single program, initial screening, non-enforcement related). We will be asking you to complete a survey after the VSV to help assess the effectiveness and improve the process.

This fact sheet provides guidance to help you learn which technology you will need and what you can expect during a VSV. The process itself will be very much like our normal inspection process.

### Opening Meeting

The first step in the process will be a pre-meeting conducted by Ohio EPA by phone/video conference. We will discuss all logistics to ensure a successful VSV. The actual inspection will be accomplished virtually, using a live streaming application in combination with photographs.

### Virtual Facility Walk-Through

During the VSV, you will walk the inspector through portions of the facility to identify all areas that would normally be evaluated on site. This type of evaluation will allow for a compliance/complaint evaluation inspection to occur without our inspectors entering your facility.

The use of virtual tools is not a substitute for the important in-person interactions needed during inspections and other field work and for effective engagement and outreach. However, the Agency is optimistic about the potential for expanding the use of these tools where they can be effective.

### More Information

If you have questions about Ohio EPA inspections, contact your local Ohio EPA district office or the Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention (OCAPP) at (614) 644-3469 or (800) 329-7518 for free help. OCAPP is a non-regulatory office of Ohio EPA with a goal of helping businesses understand and comply with the environmental requirements. [Click here](#) for a map of Ohio EPA's district offices.



### Virtual Site Visit Tips

- Familiarize yourself with the media platform (ability to connect and stream video/photos) being used. You will need to download Teams or ensure that you are using Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge.
- What equipment do you need for the meeting (camera, phone, headset, earbuds, etc.)?
- Consider using a headset with a microphone if your facility is noisy.
- Speak clearly, mute your microphone and turn off your camera when it is not needed.
- Use the web camera in landscape mode versus portrait for most situations.
- When including multiple participants from different locations (supervisors, consultants, legal team, etc.), be aware of bandwidth issues that may affect video and audio quality.
- Update the facility diagram to help designate targeted focal points during the virtual inspection. Provide a copy to your inspector when scheduling the VSV.