

This guide will help you review the key elements of managing your company's environmental concerns, develop an environmental policy statement, and determine the scope of your business goals. If you have never before considered developing an environmental policy statement, now could be a good time to start.

What is an environmental policy statement?

An environmental policy statement is a set of goals and principles which helps your company put its environmental commitments into practice. It is your company's declaration of commitment to the environment and to continual improvement of environmental practices.

Why is an environmental policy statement valuable to my business?

An environmental policy statement provides a unifying vision of environmental principles that will guide the actions of employees and management. It spells out to your staff, suppliers, customers, shareholders, directors and community where the company stands on environmental matters. By going through the process of writing a statement, you may find ways to reduce your overhead. Sound environmental management can be a valuable investment in efficiency and could pay significant dividends to your company by reducing your overhead and boosting your bottom line.



Photo by: Robert Janover, Sonoma County, CA

Who should be involved?

To ensure success in your environmental policy, the statement needs to be truly company-wide. Input from a range of people in your organization should increase commitment and ownership of your company's environmental policy statement.

Commitment to environmental improvement is central and needs to come from the organization's leadership. Leaders should define the company's environmental policy statement to ensure that:

- The environmental policy statement is communicated to all employees
- Everyone in the organization understands the environmental policy statement and what is expected of them
- The environmental policy statement is made available to the public

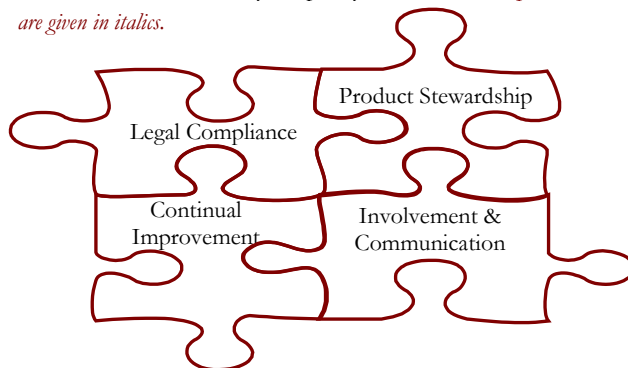
How do I get started?

As a **first step**, your company should document its existing commitments to sound environmental practices. It is likely that your company already has an environmental policy, even if it is not written. At a minimum, your company may already be committed to compliance with major environmental regulations.

As a **second step**, your policy should be related to your product and services. Keep your policy simple and understandable. Address your list of specific issues in general terms in your policy statement. For example, if chemicals in your water or air are a concern because they potentially impact the community, you could express a commitment to review, and where feasible, make changes in the chemicals used by your company.

What are the Key Elements of the Statement?

An environmental policy statement should clearly outline the company's commitment to environmental improvement. This section describes four key elements that will form the core of an effective policy statement. While there are several elements that could potentially be included, the following elements will be critical in the success of your policy statement. *Sample statements are given in italics.*



Legal Compliance

Compliance with legal requirements is a critical consideration in developing your policy statement. You will need to identify and ensure understanding of relevant laws and regulations, as well as other requirements to which your organization adheres. Any environmental policy statement should note that your company will strive to meet or exceed all applicable regulations.

Environmental regulations, laws and codes of practice will be regarded as setting the minimum standards of environmental performance.

Product Stewardship

The written commitment should make reference to implementation of measures to reduce, prevent or eliminate the environmental hazards and impacts of products. Objectives and targets may include reducing waste and the consumption of resources and/or re-designing products to minimize their environmental impact at all stages of their life cycle— from design, to manufacturing, to customer use, and to disposal.

We will employ procedures specifically designed to prevent activities and/or conditions that pose a threat to human health, safety or the environment.

Continual Improvement

Having recognized that the company has impacts on the environment, it is important to convey in the opening statement that the organization's leadership is committed to a program of continual improvement.

As a consequence of our environmental impacts, the organization's leadership is committed to continual improvement in environmental performance.

Involvement and Communication

You should reference your company's commitment to incorporating employee and customer input in your policy statement. A written statement should be made documenting that your company will communicate its environmental goals to employees, customers and other stakeholders.

We will communicate our commitment to our company's quality to our employees and customers. We will solicit their input in meeting our environmental goals.

Environmental Policy Statement Checklist

- Our policy statement is defined by management.
- Our employees participated in defining the policy.
- Our employees are informed about the policy.
- Our policy covers regulatory/legal compliance.
- Our policy states our commitment to continual improvement.
- Our policy covers the four key elements outlined.

