

Introduction

Although there is currently no legal requirement for a company to operate an environmental policy (unlike a health and safety policy), Specialist Contractors are increasingly being required to do so by their clients as a condition of obtaining work.

An environmental policy is usually a short (no longer than one page of A4) unambiguous statement written in clear and simple language, which sets out the intentions and principles of a company or organisation to manage its environmental impact in a responsible way.

There are no firm rules about how an environmental policy should look or what it should refer to, but, to be effective, it should provide a framework for action and the setting of environmental objectives and targets.

Getting Started

Under *Writing Your Policy* on page 2, you will find guidelines for producing an environmental policy. However, you may also wish to have a look at the policies of other companies in your sector or trade to see how a 'real-life' policy is put together.

Don't forget though that your environmental policy should be individual to your company, reflecting your philosophies and values, and the environmental impacts of your activities.

The temptation to copy someone else's policy or use an 'off the shelf' template, into which you just insert your name, should be resisted; after all, you don't want to find that your company's policy is identical to that of a competitor when you have made the shortlist for that important tender.

Writing Your Policy

1. Briefly introduce your company

Fictional Specialist Contractor Ltd is a specialist contracting company working in the commercial and domestic market.

If your company is part of a larger group, you may wish, depending on its image, size and influence, to mention the parent company.



2. Acknowledge that your company has an impact on the environment

We recognise that our activities have an impact on the environment in terms of the use of raw materials, emissions to air and water and waste generation, and seek to minimise this as far as is reasonably practicable.



3. Include certain environmental commitments

If your company is looking to obtain accreditation under ISO14001:2004 (the recognised standard for an Environmental Management System), your environmental policy will have to meet certain requirements, one of which is the inclusion of a commitment to improve your environmental performance, prevent pollution, and comply with environmental legislation.

Fictional Specialist Contractor is committed to:

- *Continual improvement in its environmental performance*
- *Preventing pollution*
- *Compliance with all environmental legislation, regulations and codes of practice relevant to the industry sector in which it operates.*



4. Provide a framework of objectives and targets that you intend to meet

It is the policy of Fictional Specialist Contractor to:

- *Make efficient use of natural resources by conserving energy and water, minimising waste, and recycling where possible*
- *Meet its duty of care requirements in relation to waste by ensuring the safe keeping, transportation and subsequent recovery or disposal of waste*
- *Use recycled construction materials whenever these can be commercially justified*
- *Keep transport use to a minimum and regularly service vehicles to maintain their efficiency*
- *Work with suppliers to ensure they recognise and reduce the environmental impact of their products and transportation.*

Cont...

4. cont...

An environmental policy should contain general statements of policy that can be developed into detailed actions for you and your workforce. The actions should be measurable so that you can show that you are achieving improvements in your performance. The list of policy statements is limitless, and it is important that you only include those that you intend to pursue.

Additional examples to the common ones listed above include:

- Actively promote the use of recycled materials
- Establish systems for the prevention of pollution at sites
- Take due care and attention to prevent nuisance on site
- Keep sites clean and tidy to ensure minimum disturbance to clients and neighbours
- Liaise with the local community to minimise disruption to the local environment
- Encourage members of staff to feedback to management about the company's environmental performance
- Set environmental objectives and publish them in the company's promotional literature.



5. Pledge to communicate and review

We will communicate this policy to all our employees and ensure that they are given appropriate training to raise awareness of environmental issues. Fictional Specialist Contractor will review this policy on an annual basis, taking account of any changes within legislation and our organisation, and other factors.

Any changes to your policy should be communicated to your employees by giving them each a copy of the amended policy, posting it on company notice boards or publishing it in in-house magazines or newsletters.



6. Make it publicly available

Fictional Specialist Contractor will make this policy available when requested to interested parties including members of the public.

By making your policy available to members of your supply chain, you can show them how they can contribute to your environmental objectives and targets.



7. Sign and date

Your finished policy should be signed and dated by the most senior person in your company (usually the owner or Managing Director) to give weight to the commitments and targets made.

<<Insert company logo>>

Environmental Policy

<<Insert company name>> is a specialist company which <<insert activity of company>>.

We recognise that our activities have an impact on the environment in terms of the use of raw materials, emissions to air and water, and waste generation, and seek to minimise this as far as is reasonably practicable.

<<Insert company name>> is committed to:

- Continual improvement in its environmental performance
- Preventing pollution
- Compliance with all environmental legislation, regulations and codes of practice relevant to the industry sector in which it operates.

It is the policy of <<insert company name>> to:

- Make efficient use of natural resources by conserving energy and water, minimising waste, and recycling where possible
- Meet its duty of care requirements in relation to waste by ensuring the safe keeping, transportation and subsequent recovery or disposal of waste
- Use recycled construction materials whenever these can be commercially justified
- Keep transport use to a minimum and regularly service vehicles to maintain their efficiency
- Work with suppliers to ensure they recognise and reduce the environmental impact of their products and transportation.

<<Insert company name>> will review this policy on annual basis, taking account of any changes within legislation and our organisation, and other factors.

We will communicate this policy to all our employees and ensure that they are given appropriate training to raise awareness of environmental issues.

<<Insert company name>> will make this policy available when requested to interested parties including members of the public.

<<Insert name of most senior person within company>>

Date

<<Insert job title of most senior person within company>>

<<Insert trade organisation logo>>

