

EXPERT PANEL ON AIR QUALITY STANDARDS (EPAQS) FREEDON OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

PUBLICATION SCHEME

Approval for this Publication Scheme has been granted by the Information Commissioner for the period from 29 February 2004 to 29 February 2008.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards (EPAQS) is a scientific, advisory Non-Departmental Public Body. The Panel was set up in 1991 to provide independent advice to government on air quality issues, in particular the levels of pollution at which no or minimal health effects are likely to occur.

EPAQS values openness and transparency. We are committed to proactively disseminating information, both to inform policy and to increase public knowledge and understanding of air quality issues.

EPAQS is required or advised to comply with a number of key Regulations and procedures. These include the Environmental Information Regulations, The Office of Science and Technology's Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees, the Open Government Code of Practice and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act).

In accordance with the FOI Act, this publication scheme has been designed to summarise the material published by EPAQS and how it may be obtained.

2 THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

The FOI Act became law on 30 November 2000. The act creates a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities and requires these public authorities to disclose information, subject to a range of exemptions. The general right of access will be introduced in 2005

From February 2004, EPAQS, as a Non Departmental Public Body, not within the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, has a legal requirement under Section 19 of the FOI Act to:

- adopt and maintain a scheme, which relates to the publication of information by the authority [EPAQS] and to have that scheme approved of by the Information Commissioner;
- publish information in accordance with that scheme; and
- review the Publication Scheme from time to time.

3 EPAQS' PUBLICATION SCHEME

Publication schemes are intended to encourage public organisations to be proactive in making information they hold more readily available to the public and to develop a culture of greater openness.

Section 19 of the FOI Act requires the preparation of a publication scheme; which sets out:

- The classes of information which EPAQS publishes or intends to publish;
- The manner in which they will be published,;
- Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.

EPAQS' Publication Scheme is set out below. Please note:

- this scheme will be a living document, which will be modified in light of EPAQS' work, public comment and feedback

- this scheme is not retrospective, and we do not undertake to publish information held by the EPAQS which was generated before February 2004, the date the scheme came into force

Responsibility for the EPAQS Publication Scheme

The Head of Air and Environment Quality Division has overall responsibility for the EPAQS Publication Scheme. The EPAQS Secretariat has responsibility for maintaining the scheme on a daily basis (see address below)

A copy of the scheme is available on the EPAQS website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqs/index.htm>, and hard copies can be obtained by contacting:

EPAQS Secretariat
Air and Environment Quality Division
Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs
4/E14 Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London, SW1E 6DE
Tel: ++44 (0)20 7082 8425
Fax: ++44 (0)20 7082 8385
E-mail: air.quality@defra.gsi.gov.uk

A large print version of the scheme will be available on request.

4 CLASSES OF INFORMATION IN THE PUBLICATION SCHEME

The classes of information in this scheme are specified in section 11 of the scheme. The classes are based on the types of information we publish, with related information placed together for ease of reference.

5 HOW TO OBTAIN INFORMATION

Information can be accessed in electronic form from the EPAQS website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqs/index.htm>,

Hard copies of this material can be requested from:

EPAQS Secretariat
Air and Environment Quality Division
Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs
4/E14 Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London, SW1E 6DE
Tel: ++44 (0)20 7082 8425
Fax: ++44 (0)20 7082 8385
E-mail: air.quality@defra.gsi.gov.uk

From time to time, some publications will be revised or fall out of use and in this case it will not always be possible to provide out-of-date or out-of-print material. Records considered worthy of permanent preservation are transferred to the Defra Information Resource Centre, which provides a public enquiry service.

6 EXEMPT INFORMATION

Some material within classes of the Publication Scheme may contain information that we consider exempt, due to reasons such as confidentiality and privacy. When considering whether or not to withhold information, we will take into account the grounds listed in the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, the Environmental Information Regulations and the Freedom of Information Act as well as considering the public interest in disclosing the information. Where exemptions are applied, published material will clearly show where information has been withheld and explain why.

7 CHARGING POLICY

As far as possible we aim to make information available free of charge. The exceptions are:

- Where a cover charge is indicated for a printed document
- Where substantial resources are required to respond to a request

Documents on the EPAQS website can be down loaded free of charge. Users will, of course, have to meet any charge made by their internet service provider and personal printing costs. For those without Internet access, a single printout will be provided free of charge on request to the Secretariat (see section 6). Requests for multiple print outs or from outside the UK may, however, attract a charge payable in advance. This will be made known at the time the request is made.

8 COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

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9 CLASSES OF INFORMATION

CLASS DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION	AVAILABILITY	COST
<p>General Information</p> <p>Background information on the role and work of EPAQS. Typically this will include the Terms of Reference of the Panel, a current work plan and periodic review reports</p>	<p>Online at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqs/index.htm or hard copy by contacting the EPAQS Secretariat (for details see Section 6)</p>	Free
<p>Meetings</p> <p>Copies of agendas, minutes and supporting papers from EPAQS meetings for the most recent three years. Some material in this class may be considered exempt from publication. Typically this will include; material regarded as containing confidential deliberations, internal communications or unfinished documents. Where exemptions have been applied this will be indicated.</p>	<p>Online at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqs/meetings/index.htm or hard copy by contacting the EPAQS Secretariat (for details see Section 6)</p>	Free

<p>Members</p> <p>Details of the membership of the Panel including brief biographical details and the current Register of Interests</p>	<p>Online at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqs/index.htm or hard copy by contacting the EPAQS Secretariat (for details see Section 6)</p>	<p>Free</p>
<p>Reports</p> <p>Scientific reports produced by the Panel</p>	<p>Online at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqs/index.htm Hard copies are available by contacting the EPAQS Secretariat (for details see Section 6) or; Recent publications can be obtained from Defra Publications, Admail 6000, London, SW1A 2XX, Tel: 08459 556000, Fax: 020 8957 5012, Email: defra@iforcegroup.com Documents published before 2002 can be obtained from The Stationary Office (TSO) and are available to buy online at http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop, or by mail from TSO PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN, telephone orders/enquiries on 0870 6005522, or by fax orders on 0870 6005533, or through the Parliamentary Hotline Lo-call 0845 7023474, or email book.orders@tso.co.uk, or text order on 0870 240 3701, through TSO shops, the Parliamentary Bookshop or TSO accredited agents.</p>	<p>Electronic copies are free</p> <p>A charge is made for printed copies</p>