

Environmental Quality

Goal

Ensure Delawareans have a healthy environment in which to live, work, and play.

Objectives

1. By 2010, reduce the average number of times per year that Delaware exceeds the US Environmental Protection Agency's standard for ozone from 4.3 to 1. [Relates to Healthy People 2010 objective 8-1a]
2. (Developmental) By 2010, increase the use of alternative modes of transportation, including public transportation by 42%. [Relates to Healthy People 2010 objective 8-2]
3. (Developmental) By 2006, establish a statewide surveillance system for tracking asthma deaths, illness, disability, and in/out patient hospitalization. [Relates to Healthy People 2010 objective 24-2]
4. By 2010, increase the amount of recycling of recyclable materials from 14% to 21%. [Relates to Healthy People 2010 objective 8-15]
5. By 2005, increase the percentage of Delawareans served by community water systems with optimally fluoridated water from 66% to 75%. [Relates to Healthy People 2010 objective 21-9]
6. By 2010, increase the percentage of rivers and streams that are safe for recreational purposes (swimming and fishing) by 5% over 2000 baseline. [Relates to Healthy People 2010 objective 8-8]
7. By 2010, reduce the number of children one to five years old with elevated blood lead levels from 6.5% to 3.25%. [Relates to Healthy People 2010 objective 8-25c]

Notes:

"Environmental" includes both natural environments and man-made environments.

The numeral assignment of each objective does not indicate priority, simply enumeration.

"Developmental" objectives are those that currently do not have state baseline data and, therefore, have no operational definitions. The purpose of developmental objectives is to identify areas of emerging importance and to drive the development of data systems to measure them.

Important roles for each sector*

Business

- Adopt programs, policies, and employee incentives to protect the environment and partner with state agencies to help all businesses comply with regulations.

Community

- Educate communities on environmental responsibility, evaluate and advocate for environmentally friendly ordinances and codes, and encourage lead hazard reduction efforts.

Health Care

- Educate and require staff to screen for diseases linked to environmental hazards and educate patients about environmental health risks.

Education

- Integrate environmental quality education into curricula, and evaluate school buildings and grounds to ensure a safe environment.

Government

- Increase industry inspection and code enforcement, improve public transportation systems, increase monitoring, and educate the public on environmental hazards and health risks.



Healthy Delaware Hero



Willet Kempton

Willet Kempton, a University of Delaware Marine Studies professor, commutes to work daily on his bicycle. Several years ago, he was hit by a car and knocked down. That accident was the impetus for a new idea - commuter corridor through the city of Newark to allow people to walk, jog, bike or skate to their destinations. Working four years with the Newark bicycle committee, Kempton has obtained funding and designs for the commuter corridor. The corridor is 1.7 miles long and has no road crossing. This design not only eliminates traffic hazards but also sets this path apart from other corridors like it on the East Coast.

Kempton is proud of shepherding the corridor plan through. "People can go to work or school without having to get in cars. That's good for the environment," Kempton said.

Resources (General)

- Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, (302) 739-4403, fax (302) 739-6242, www.dnrec.state.de.us/DNREC2000 - state data, information on air, water, and land pollutants
- Division of Public Health, Environmental Health Evaluation Branch, (302) 739-6619/5617, fax (302) 739-6617, www.state.de.us/dhss/dph/btd/home.htm - flyers and informational materials, fact sheets, toxicology information, information on indoor air and water source quality, Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
- Environmental Protection Agency, (800) 438-2474, fax (215) 814-5103, www.epa.gov/region03 - current news and issues, laws and regulations, customized mapping of environmental information

The mentioning of specific programs does not connote endorsement and was not meant to be exclusionary. We apologize for any unintentional omissions; please bring these to our attention.

Closing the Gap

Studies have linked race and socioeconomic status to increased exposure to environmental hazards.

Despite progress in the reduction of childhood lead poisoning, there are still Delaware children poisoned by lead every year. Many are in the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum. Most of them are found in the urban northern area of the state, where the child's family lives in older, dilapidated housing. Of the children requiring a home inspection in Delaware during 1999-2000, 65% were in the City of Wilmington in areas with a large percentage of older housing.

Health officials, parents, communities, and medical providers must continue emphasizing the dangers of lead in order to eliminate this disparity. In addition, older housing needs to be rehabilitated so children can live in a lead safe environment. The State of Delaware, HUD, and the Latin American Community Center are engaged in a neighborhood revitalization project that will help eliminate sources of lead exposure in older dwellings. If successful, the project could be expanded to other areas.

