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## State Environmental Policy Act Handbook

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## Introduction

Welcome to the 1998 Edition of the SEPA Handbook. The focus of this volume is to provide guidance on the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). We have included information on the history and purpose of SEPA and its relationship with other associated environmental laws. We have provided explanations of the purpose and importance of each step in the SEPA process, and tips on how to best complete them.

The 2003 updates include: (1) corrections, including new phone numbers and internet addresses; (2) an expanded section on categorical exemptions, including information on the 2003 SEPA amendment that allows cities and counties to create categorical exemptions for residential and mixed use infill; and (3) additional court case summaries.

A list of **Acronyms** immediately follows the **Table of Contents**. **Table 1** provides a brief overview of the SEPA process with references to the corresponding sections of the SEPA Rules. The appendices include a section on **Frequently Asked Questions**, another on SEPA-related **Significant Court Cases**, information on **Additional Resources**, and a selection of **Sample Letters and Forms**.

This handbook is also available via the Internet by accessing Ecology's homepage at http://www.ecy.wa.gov and selecting "Services" and "Environmental Review (SEPA)". The SEPA Statute (Chapter 43.21C RCW), the SEPA Rules (Chapter 197-11 WAC), the SEPA Model Ordinance (Chapter 173-806 WAC), the SEPA Register, other guidance documents, and the SEPA forms can also be accessed at this location. (See **Appendix C, Additional Resources** for more information.)

We hope you find the format and content of the SEPA Handbook helpful in your work with SEPA, whether you are a responsible official, reviewing agency, applicant, concerned citizen, or tribal member. If you have additional questions (or comments you would like to make on this publication), please contact our office:

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You may also contact any of our Regional Offices, particularly for questions on SEPA documents currently under review.

Northwest Region, Bellevue: (425) 649-7000 (Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties)

Southwest Region, Lacey: (360) 407-6300 (Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, and Wahkiakum Counties)

Central Region, Yakima: (509) 575-2490 (Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, and Yakima Counties)

Eastern Region, Spokane: (509) 329-3400 (Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Whitman Counties)

The SEPA Handbook is intended to be used in conjunction with the State Environmental Policy Act (Chapter 43.21C RCW) and the SEPA Rules (Chapter 197-11 WAC). Should a conflict be found at any time between the guidance in this handbook and either the SEPA Rules or the RCW, it should be understood that this handbook is intended as guidance only, and does not have the legal standing of the RCW or the Rule.