



# ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

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## Information Interchange Bulletin No. 012

# National Environmental Policy Act Basics

### What is the National Environmental Policy Act?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. §§ 4321–4347) requires federal agencies to assess the environmental impacts of their proposed actions before making decisions. NEPA does not impose substantive duties mandating particular results; it simply prescribes a process for preventing uninformed agency action.

### What is an environmental impact statement?

NEPA requires agencies to prepare a detailed study, called an environmental impact statement (EIS), when proposing a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The EIS must describe the proposed action and its purpose and need, describe the affected environment, presents the range of alternatives to the proposed action, and analyzes the environmental impact of the proposed action and the range of alternatives.

### Who is responsible for implementing NEPA?

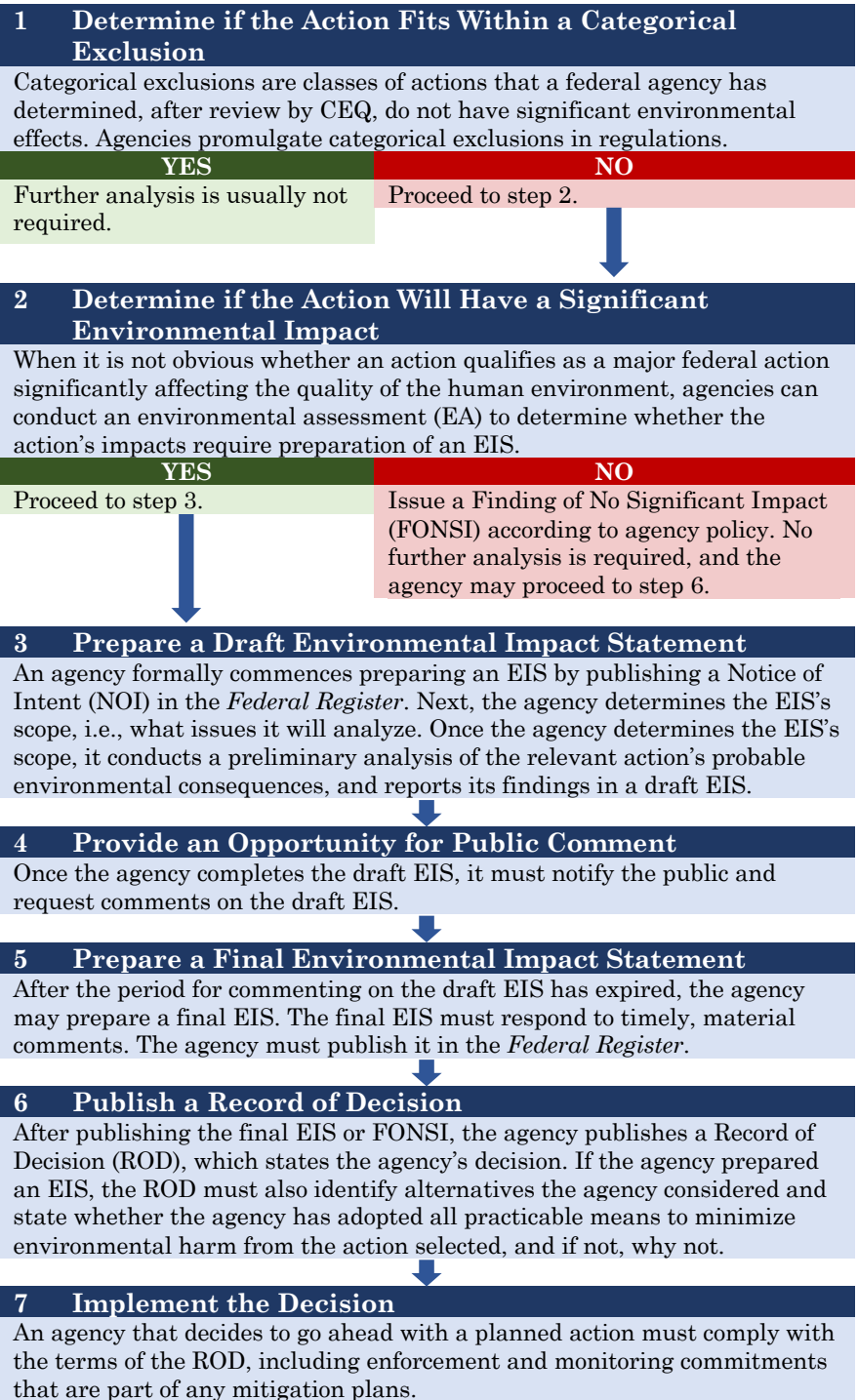
NEPA establishes the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which advises the president on NEPA compliance and issues regulations and guidance to implement NEPA (40 C.F.R. §§ 1500–1599). Agencies are required to develop their own specific policies and procedures to implement NEPA, in consultation with CEQ (42 U.S.C. § 4332; 40 C.F.R. § 1507.3). Agencies' procedures must be consistent federal statutes and CEQ's NEPA regulations.

#### Additional Resources

[NEPA.gov](http://www.epa.gov), Council on Environmental Quality  
[National Environmental Policy Act](#), ACUS  
Administrative Procedure Sourcebook

[www.acus.gov](http://www.acus.gov)

### What is the NEPA review process?



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