
MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS

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SUMMARY

This paper reviews the history of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) efforts to measure the success of its enforcement programs, and it discusses recent efforts to improve its measurement of the environmental and programmatic results achieved through enforcement. In preface to this discussion it is useful to introduce two axioms which have been employed during EPA's past and current efforts to develop measures of success for its programs. The first is stated in the positive and says that "what gets measured, gets done." Under this axiom, well defined measures will encourage the correct things to happen and the quality of work will be high. The second is stated in a more cautionary tone and says "be careful what you ask for, you might get it." Under this axiom, poorly defined measures of success, or a management system overloaded with measures of low priority activities, may actually encourage ineffectiveness and inefficiencies and result in unintended or undesired outcomes.

EPA is striving to employ measures of both environmental and compliance results, rather than relying solely on measures of the activities of EPA and state compliance and enforcement programs. There are many challenges ahead in developing these results measures. Among the most challenging tasks is developing measures which serve the multiple purposes of helping managers manage and communicating externally to the public and the regulated community about progress that has been made and the continuing importance of ensuring environmental compliance.

1 MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Measures of success are vital tools for effectively guiding and implementing compliance and enforcement programs and communicating results to the public and policy makers. Information about program activities and results, and information about what is happening at regulated facilities, can ensure that individuals responsible for pursuing compliance and enforcement are, in fact, doing so consistently and fairly using established procedures and strategies. This information can help managers adjust compliance and enforcement programs to changing conditions, and provide lessons learned as the program is implemented. Periodic program evaluations based on activity and results information gathered through the measures of success serve many purposes including evaluating program goals, strategies, internal agency accountability and public accountability, and creating deterrence among regulated facilities.

Success can be measured in two basic ways. One involves setting goals or targets and then comparing actual activity to the goal. An example of this approach is establishing the number of facilities that will be inspected during the year and then comparing actual performance with commitments. A second way of measuring success involves no formal commitments about

output levels but instead tracks results by looking for trends and changes in conditions (either environmental or programmatic) over time. Under either method, how the desired products or results are defined is crucial to having effective measures and effective programs.

Following the axiom “what gets measured, gets done,” if measures are well defined the program is more likely to be successful and produce the correct results. If, however, the measures are poorly defined the management system may actually encourage ineffective and inefficient activities. Like water flowing down a hill, organizations will tend to follow the path of least resistance. If the measures of success are defined to give equal acknowledgment, for example, for issuing a citation for a minor infraction as is given for addressing a complex major violation at a big facility through a lengthy judicial action, a likely result is that many citations will be issued but few complex violations will be addressed. Or, if the measures of success only acknowledge the beginning stages of the enforcement process, and do not measure and create incentives for completing those processes, it is likely that backlogs of unfinished work will accumulate.

Along with sound definitions, it is also important that realistic goals be set. A balance needs to be struck between making goals challenging for the organization and avoiding over ambitious goals which may set up the organization and its staff for failure. While success can never be guaranteed, if success in the terms defined by the management system is perceived by managers and staff to be impossible to achieve, then the management system will not be creating proper incentives and will not be well received. The potential for these types of unintended or undesired outcomes makes it important during the process of defining measures and establishing goals to bear in mind the management axiom “be careful what you ask for, you might get it.”

1.1 The measurement spectrum

Figure 1 represents the spectrum of performance measures for environmental programs. The measures on the left of the spectrum have been used for some time by EPA’s management system to direct its highly decentralized media-based compliance and enforcement programs. These programs are decentralized in ten regional offices. In addition to their many compliance and enforcement tasks, the regional offices also monitor the progress of the media compliance and enforcement programs that are operated by the fifty states. Much of the monitoring of state efforts is through commitments and reporting carried out to implement the measures of success.

The spectrum ranges from relatively simple activity measures on the left to sophisticated environmental indicators on the right. Measures on the left side of the spectrum are well established in EPA. These measures include numbers of judicial and administrative enforcement actions initiated, numbers of various types of inspections, level of monetary fines, and timeliness of enforcement response. Consistent with the axiom that “what gets measured, gets done,” the management system has been very successful in encouraging and rewarding the assessment of monetary fines (Figure 2), initiation of enforcement actions (Figure 3), and inspections. These measures will be discussed in greater detail below.

Moving to the right along the spectrum has proven more difficult, and progress has been slower than the agency desires. In the past, the agency has had mixed success in implementing results measures such as overall compliance rate measures and measures of the value of corrective and preventive action taken as a direct result of enforcement actions. Improved environmental quality and protection of human health are the ultimate goals of environmental programs and, therefore, are the most desired measures of success. Incremental progress in the direction of developing environmental results indicators has recently been made, and on a limited basis EPA is now able to characterize the pollution reduced or avoided through its enforcement actions. Earlier attempts by the Agency to develop measures on the right of the

MEASUREMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY SPECTRUM OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES

*Measurement
Improvement
Efforts*



**Activity
Measures**

•actions by
EPA/States

•actions by
regulated
community

•discharge/
emission
quantities

•ambient
conditions/
concentrations

•body burdens/
assimilation

**Environmental
Indicators**

•human health
•ecosystems
•welfare

spectrum have been stymied by the desire to design and define the “ultimate measures.” The “ultimate measures” have been elusive, being either too difficult or too expensive to measure. The new measures that are being implemented resulted from a recent effort by EPA to critically evaluate the ways that it has measured compliance and enforcement success over time, and chart a course for the future that assures that proper incentives are being created for achieving real results in protection of human health and the environment. In this evaluation, the Agency did not try to develop the “ultimate measures,” rather it was determined early in the proceedings that making incremental progress would be satisfactory. Much of the earlier institutional resistance that had resulted in making no progress in developing measures to the right on the spectrum was avoided by accepting incremental progress rather than insisting on establishing the “ultimate measures.”

It is useful to note that the evaluation of compliance and enforcement measures took place in conjunction with EPA’s recently implemented reorganization of its compliance and enforcement operations at its headquarters in Washington, D. C. Prior to the reorganization, compliance and enforcement operations in headquarters were decentralized among five major offices that were organized solely by media, i.e., air, water, hazardous waste, pesticides, and toxic substances. Now consolidated into one office, the reorganized structure emphasizes cross-program, multi-media approaches that look comprehensively at all facilities within particular industries (e.g., petroleum refining, iron and steel, chemical manufacturing), particular geographic areas (e.g., critical watersheds), or emissions of pollutants of concern (e.g., known or suspected carcinogens, metals). Conducting the evaluation of the measures during the reorganization was advantageous because many traditional ways of doing business were already being changed, and much of the organizational resistance to change which had existed in the old decentralized structure disappeared.

The evaluation process resulted in the implementation of new measures that move to the right along the spectrum. The new measures are intended to provide incentives for pursuing multi-media approaches, emphasize completing actions and achieving high quality environmental and programmatic results, and encourage alternative approaches to

environmental protection such as compliance assistance. Reflective of EPA senior management's priorities for compliance and enforcement, measures that are now being utilized by EPA include: quantification of environmental results obtained through compliance and enforcement actions; facility and industrial sector multi-media compliance rates over time; progress in returning significant noncompliers to compliance; inspections of regulated facilities; enforcement actions; monetary fines assessed; monetary value of actions taken by regulated entities to achieve compliance; and measures of compliance assistance activities.

Each of these measures has advantages and disadvantages which will be discussed in turn below. Based on experience, it is clear within EPA that several measures need to be used to gain a meaningful and comprehensive assessment of program performance and effectiveness. No single measure can capture the breadth and depth of complex environmental programs. In developing measures several key questions need to be addressed, including: the expected accuracy of the measure; the resources that will be needed to collect and maintain the data; the frequency of data collection; who will analyze the data and to whom will they report their findings; and how will the data be stored (e.g., in a centralized computer, local computer systems, or a paper system).

Measuring the success of compliance and enforcement programs is not an easy task. Organizations and programs are dynamic entities, and new programs or regulations are always on the horizon. It is important, therefore, that the management system provide an opportunity for periodic dialogue at many levels within the organization about how success should be measured. Collecting and processing reliable information on compliance and enforcement requires long-term commitment of resources and management support. Personnel involved in gathering or analyzing data need to clearly understand exactly what data should be reported, and that this function is very important to the successful operation of the overall program. It is also important to acknowledge that different levels within the compliance and enforcement program may have different data needs. Local personnel may prefer to focus their resources on data they consider valuable for evaluating program performance. Facility specific information on inspections and compliance status is likely to be very important to them. Program personnel at a national level may have different perspectives and priorities. They may need highly aggregated data that sum the inspectional or enforcement activities from all the facilities across the nation. As a result of this hierarchy of data needs, national data systems appear to benefit significantly if they are designed to meet the day-to-day needs of the local office managers and staff. This creates an incentive for them to gather and maintain accurate data. If the data are accurate at this level, a properly designed data system will be able to aggregate national summary information for use by the central office.

1.2 Results measures

1.2.1 Environmental results

As mentioned above, improved environmental quality is an ultimate goal of environmental programs and, therefore, measures of environmental success are highly desired. The types of environmental results that can be measured include changes in overall environmental quality, reduction of pollutant releases, and risk reduction. These measures pose several difficulties that need to be addressed. Among the issues commonly cited within EPA as obstacles to developing measures of environmental results are: a potentially significant lag time between the compliance assistance and/or enforcement response activity and the resulting improvement in

environmental quality; difficulties in linking changes in environmental quality to specific sources or specific compliance actions; and factors such as changing weather patterns or economic conditions which affect environmental quality and therefore the accuracy of this measure.

The recent evaluation of the measures of success resulted in a recommendation that the Agency routinely gather and report data on actual reductions in pollutant emissions or discharge loadings that result from enforcement settlements, pollution prevention activity, and/or compliance assistance activity. Also recommended was a systematic method for collecting these data at the time enforcement cases are being concluded. Benefits of collecting the data at this time include creating greater incentive for concluding actions, and improved accuracy by gathering the data when the staff involved in the action are likely to have the greatest understanding of the environmental results to be achieved. In order to calculate emission/effluent reductions, compliance and enforcement personnel will also need to routinely document the conditions (establish the baseline) when violations are discovered. To augment the quantitative data, narrative descriptions will be routinely developed describing the environmental conditions that existed at the time that the facility was found in violation along with the results which are expected when the settlement or order is fully implemented. This data will also be gathered at the time that the case is concluded.

Measuring the environmental results of reporting and record-keeping violations has always proven to be a challenge. Now, environmental benefits attributable to the correction of violations of reporting requirements or violations that do not involve illegal discharges will also be quantified, i.e., the failure to submit required emissions reports or the failure to make proper hazardous waste determinations. To the extent possible, personnel will quantify the volume of discharge or the amount of waste subject to the requirement. Then, the success measure would be to declare that as a result of the enforcement action that brought about correction of the violation, "x" tons of emissions were now being properly regulated by the Agency or "y" barrels of hazardous were now being properly managed in accordance with the law.

Additional measures have been recommended that are intended to capture implementation of source reduction technology which describe the specific types of pollution prevention processes or activities which are utilized (e.g., input chemical substitution, process change, closed loop recycling, product reformulation, etc.) Environmental benefits can result from enforcement settlements or compliance assistance activity.

There are some examples of successful early efforts in the U.S. to measure environmental results. These have been written about previously in the proceedings of both the Budapest and Oaxaca Conferences and will not be discussed in detail here. For further information on these efforts please refer to pages 11-16 to 11-20 of the Budapest proceedings for discussion of the Clean Water Act National Municipal Policy, and pages 11-20 to 11-25 for the discussion on the Marketable Reductions of Lead in the U.S. (also known as Lead Phasedown). Please also refer to pages 181 to 196 of the Oaxaca proceedings for the paper entitled, "The Great Lakes Enforcement Strategy: Using Enforcement Resources to Maximize Risk Reduction and Environmental Restoration in the Great Lakes Basin."

1.2.2 Compliance rates

Compliance rates are one of the best overall measures of enforcement success, and in an ideal world high rates of compliance are the ultimate goal of most programs. Most EPA programs are able to record and assess overall compliance rates on a macro-level. Among the issues commonly cited in discussions about developing meaningful compliance rates are: the reliability of compliance rates is dependent on the thoroughness and frequency of inspections and/or the accuracy of self reported data; a lower compliance rate may mean that the program is

doing a good job of detecting violations, that the program is using stringent standards for compliance, and/or that the regulatory requirements are stringent; and a high compliance rate can be misleading if the most significant pollution sources remain out of compliance or if the sources fail to stay in compliance. Because of these issues, many U.S. programs have found it difficult to hold managers accountable for improvements in compliance rates, and some program managers have in the past vigorously opposed implementing reporting on compliance rates as a measure of success. All U.S. programs have, however, utilized some form of compliance rate to suggest specific areas requiring management attention. If compliance rates are to be used as a measure of success, the following issues need to be considered: is compliance considered to be achieved when final required emission levels are met or when a facility is meeting a schedule for compliance set forth in an enforcement agreement; should the compliance rate be calculated based on only the most significant requirements or is it based on all requirements; how should sources be reported that are in compliance during the reporting period but which are known to regularly go in and out of compliance.

The recent evaluation of the measures of success resulted in a recommendation that the Agency continue to routinely gather and report data on compliance rates. In the past, the use of facility compliance rates as a method of gauging program progress and success has had mixed results. The compliance rate information that have been generated in the past have been limited in determining program success since all regulated facilities for particular media programs have been aggregated together into very large numbers (e.g., 40,000 major air sources, 8,000 major water dischargers, etc.), and uncertainties about the timeliness and completeness of information in automated data systems. From a purely mathematical perspective, it takes large numbers of facilities either entering or leaving compliance to move the compliance rate numbers in a discernible direction. If similarly large numbers of facilities go into and out of compliance, it can appear as if no change has occurred. For example, over time the air program has frequently reported overall compliance rates of 90% - 95%, however, these data do not indicate which types of sources tend to be in noncompliance, whether there are many repeat violators, and what these facilities represent in terms of contribution to overall emissions of air pollutants. As result, existing compliance rate measures have been viewed as not being very useful and have been used infrequently.

Use of compliance rates as a measure of success will be reinvigorated by both broadening and narrowing how the concept is applied. The use of compliance rates would be broadened through looking at a multi-media picture of compliance, and it would be narrowed by limiting this multi-media view to particular industries (e.g., petroleum refining, iron and steel manufacturing), high priority geographic areas, emission of pollutants of concern, and/or corporation-wide noncompliance. These are smaller slices of the total universe of regulated facilities, but the picture for these slices will be much more comprehensive. These data, which will help guide targeting and priority-setting decisions, can serve as the baseline against which progress and success are measured over time. For the most part, the rates that are calculated will look back at the pattern of compliance for a period of two years. This length of time should be sufficient to detect most patterns of recidivism and/or periodic noncompliance.

A key obstacle to successful implementation of compliance rates is organizational impatience. Due to the significant length of time that can pass before results in a particular area of emphasis are realized and measured, it is necessary for the organization to be patient with this approach.

1.2.3 Progress in returning significant noncompliers to compliance

As noted in the paper "Principles of Environmental Enforcement and Beyond: Building and Institutional Capacity" from the proceedings of the Third International Conference on Environmental Enforcement in Oaxaca, Mexico, significant noncompliers (SNC) are those noncompliers that have the greatest potential or actual impact on environmental quality. Bringing them into compliance will, therefore, have a significant impact on environmental quality. It may also have an important deterrent effect since these noncompliers are frequently large and well known sources within the regulated community. This indicator can be appropriate for both tracking and goal setting. It is important to remember that this indicator does not provide any measure of success achieved in that portion of the regulated community that are not defined as "significant noncompliers."

The U. S. has used variations of this measure since the late 1970's, and it is one of the country's most successful management tools. At first, U.S. program officials identified the most significant air and water pollution sources throughout the nation which had not installed the pollution control equipment that would bring them into initial compliance with the applicable statutes and proceeded to take action against them. This effort brought many large facilities into compliance. This was a finite list, however, and enforcement activity declined when the initial list was exhausted.

In the mid-1980's, the U.S. expanded use of the concept to look at the full range of environmental statutes on an ongoing, dynamic basis. National criteria have been established for each program which define what constitutes a significant noncomplier. Definitions have also been developed for the types of actions that should be taken for particular types of violations. EPA regional office and state agency personnel identify significant noncompliers in their jurisdiction and make commitments to take action to resolve the noncompliance. Sources are tracked until compliance is achieved. Performance is evaluated based on how closely these goals are met. Advantages of this approach include: it tracks results achieved, and actions and results can be easily associated; the system encourages actions that will have significant environmental benefits; and enforcement program managers can analyze the data for patterns of compliance across industry, companies, and environmental media.

While there are many similarities between the significant noncomplier definitions and measures among each of the media programs, there are also many differences. Many of these differences are easily attributable to differences in the various laws that establish the programs, however, there are many differences that are more reflective of the personalities and management styles of the individuals who were in charge of the programs at the time that the measures were developed. The significant noncomplier measures are at the heart of the management systems and day-to-day operations of the media programs. Long-term decisions that were made about how accounting for the measures functions has made program-to-program comparisons difficult without a comprehensive understanding of the nuances of each programs' methodology. Decisions about how data are gathered and tracked have impacted decisions about major acquisitions of computer hardware and software. Many of these media-specific decisions that were made in the mid-1980's have had long-term impacts on the usefulness and ease of understanding the data. They have affected whether the measures are actually guiding the programs and are leading to programmatic and/or environmental results, or whether the measures have been mostly bean counting tools. To overcome the significant differences among the media programs in both hardware (mainframe and mini-computer) and software (five incompatible software platforms) and develop comprehensive multi-media facility and industry-specific data, EPA has had to develop very sophisticated data integration software that is capable of linking data from twelve different data systems. Even with this software, users of the data still need to have extensive knowledge of the definitional and accounting nuances for each media program.

At the time that these measures were put in place in the mid- to late-1980's, general guidance was provided on how they should be developed. The media programs were allowed to develop their individual approaches. A few key common standards were set forth to guide the development, but many decisions relating to accounting methodology and computer hardware and software were left up to the individual program managers. In retrospect, this degree of individual program flexibility would not be recommended. The different and frequently incompatible approaches that were developed by the media program offices have had major consequences for the Agency's subsequent efforts to develop and implement multi-media approaches. If the Agency had it to do over again, it is likely that the guidance would be more prescriptive about standard accounting methodologies and computer hardware and software considerations. Some individuality by the media programs would undoubtedly be necessary, but the wide differences in approaches taken do not appear to have been necessary due to the individual needs of each program.

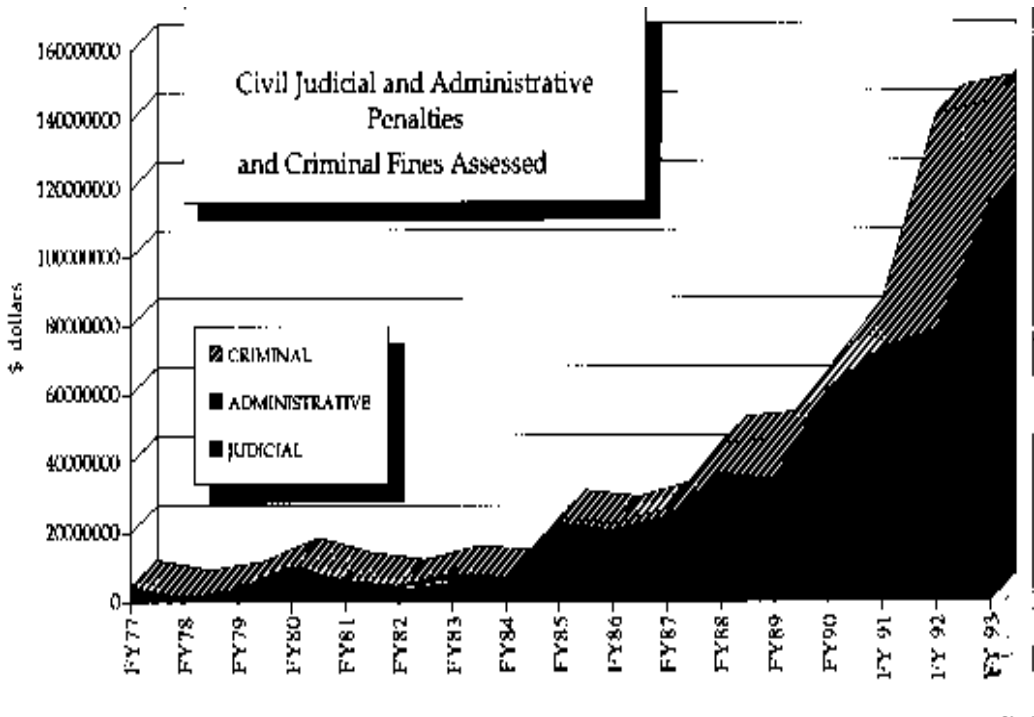
1.2.4 Monetary fines assessed

This indicator is simply the total number and/or value of penalties assessed as a result of enforcement actions. Trends in this indicator (see Figure 2) are used to measure success since it is not possible or appropriate to set goals for how many penalties should be assessed during a particular time period or how severe the penalties should be. This measure is not a good means for holding managers accountable for successful enforcement activity because there is usually a significant lag time (sometimes years) between the initiation of an enforcement action and the assessment of a monetary penalty. In the U.S., until recently, reports on the total value of monetary fines were prepared at the end of each fiscal year. With the advent of more systematic approaches to gathering data on the results of concluded enforcement actions this information will be prepared at the mid-year and end-of-year.

As Figure 2 shows, the level of fines in the U.S. has been steadily increasing. This is reflective of a number of factors. Overall, EPA's enforcement programs have been vigorously enforcing the law and initiating record numbers of civil enforcement actions. In addition, the civil penalty policies for each media program have become well established. These policies apply to both judicial and administrative enforcement cases, and fines in each of these categories have been increasing. Finally, the federal government has placed increased emphasis and resources in its criminal environmental enforcement program, and, as a result, the number of cases taken and the level of fines have been increasing. All together, in FY 1994, EPA levied over \$151 million in civil and criminal fines. The Agency ensures that these figures are well publicized, and looks to them as a key component of its effort to create deterrence.

1.2.5 Nature and monetary value of injunctive relief: correcting the violation

This indicator provides information on the nature and value of the injunctive relief assessed as a result of enforcement actions. This measure provides narrative descriptions of the physical actions that are required of facilities through enforcement settlements. This measure also includes the estimated value of the cost of undertaking these actions. When viewed with information on monetary fines assessed, the enforcement program has a more complete handle on the full impact of enforcement actions. Trends in this indicator are used to measure success,



but are not used for goal setting. In the U.S., reports on the nature and value of injunctive relief are prepared twice per year. Efforts to gather this data are relatively new and it is too early to know what role it will play in long-term program management and priority setting. Gathering accurate data will be a challenge due to the many complexities of estimating the cost of procurement and installation of pollution control equipment, interest costs, etc. Early indications are, however, that the value of injunctive relief may total 4 - 5 times the amount of monetary penalties.

1.3 Activity measures

1.3.1 Measures of compliance monitoring

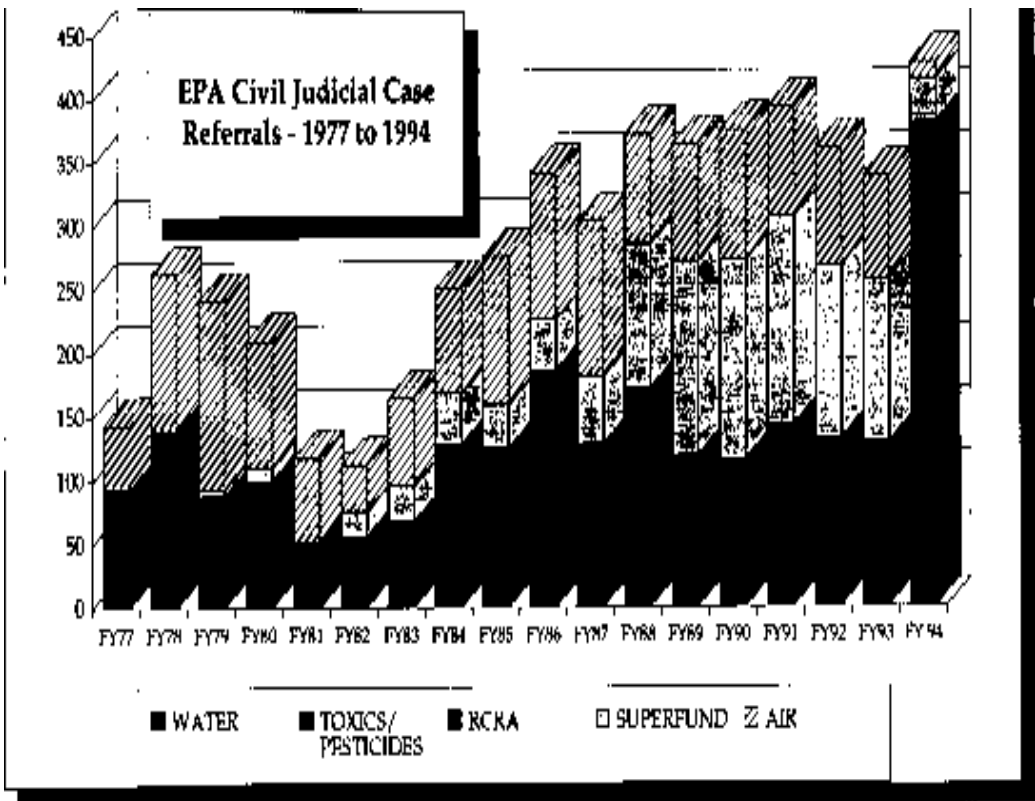
Another measure of success, appropriate for both tracking and goal-setting, is how well an enforcement program monitors compliance. Several measures can track progress in this area including: the number of inspections; the quantity of self-reported data received by the regulatory agency; and the quality of self-reported data received by the regulatory agency

The number of inspections is probably the easiest of these indicators to track. This indicator provides a quantitative measure of program success in creating an enforcement presence. EPA uses these indicators in its enforcement programs to set goals for inspections and for reporting on progress. Policymakers develop national criteria for effective inspection strategies and program officials evaluate the strategies against these criteria. These measures are relatively straightforward and have been relatively easy to implement.

1.3.2 Number of enforcement responses

Legal action is the ultimate tool in the environmental enforcers' arsenal. Measures of enforcement responses may therefore be of particular interest to members of the public that are concerned about environmental quality. In the U.S., for example, this measure has been viewed by the public and by U.S. lawmakers as an indication of program managers' commitment to gain compliance, and it is therefore closely tracked. To use this indicator, policymakers must decide exactly what will be counted: total number of legal cases initiated (Figure 3); a breakdown of the types of cases by severity of violation, number of sites involved, multiple violations, repeat violators; the number of cases successfully concluded, etc. These indicators are not generally appropriate for goal-setting because making program managers responsible for meeting quotas for enforcement response could undermine the objectivity of the program.

Depending on the maturity of the enforcement program, more comprehensive enforcement response indicators may need to be developed that encourage an appropriate balance between the initiation of new enforcement response activities and the conclusion of already initiated matters. Activity accounting approaches that place most of their emphasis on the initiation of actions, and relatively little emphasis or incentive on bringing already initiated matters to conclusion, may result in increasing backlogs of unresolved cases and delay reaching the point in the enforcement process where environmental results are achieved.



1.3.3 Timeliness of enforcement responses

One of the best indicators of a program's efficiency is the time it takes to either 1) respond to a violation; or 2) achieve compliance. Ideally, many types of enforcement responses should be as swift as possible so that the source can return to compliance as quickly as possible. Timeliness can be evaluated by monitoring trends and by comparing actual results against predetermined goals. Timeliness can also be measured by setting goals for different types of enforcement actions. Goals can only be set for more routine types of enforcement actions that consistently take a predictable time to complete. Complex legal actions do not generally lend themselves to such goals. Also, timely response may not be possible or appropriate in some cases, such as criminal cases, that require detailed investigation before an enforcement action is filed. Care may be necessary to ensure that use of timeliness as a measure of program success does not encourage enforcement personnel to take simple administrative action rather than pursuing a more complex and time-consuming enforcement response.

In practice in the U.S., this measure has met with mixed success. Key factors that have affected implementation of these measures include relations between EPA and its state program partners, and the level of technical and legal staffing in the regional offices vis-à-vis the number of violators that need to be addressed. Tracking timeliness information has also proven to be more difficult than was expected, with the nuances of particular cases making it difficult to categorize the multitude of possible outcomes. Success against timeliness measures will always be a standard that EPA and the states aspire to, however, it remains to be seen whether timeliness in the real world is a practical standard for assessing program success.

The Clean Water Act program has probably had the most success among the various programs in implementing a timeliness measure. This success seems to be largely the result of two factors: the way that compliance status is reported in this program, and the length of time that EPA and/or the states have to make a "timely response" to the violation. Source compliance status reporting in the Clean Water program lends itself more readily to precise tracking because permitted sources must install monitoring equipment in outfall pipes that continuously monitors the amount and characteristics of the effluent being discharged to surface waters. These detailed data are sent to EPA and/or the state agency monthly. It is possible, therefore, to know with some precision when a facility has entered into noncompliance and to track the timeliness of the actions taken by EPA or the states to return it to compliance. In large part due to the timing and structure of the automated reporting in this program, the timeframe for "timely response" is set at 180 days from detection. This timeframe is from 30 - 50 days longer than for the other programs. Actual experience in the other programs suggests that the current definitions of a "timely response" may be unrealistically short and that a timeframe more on the order of that used in the Clean Water program would be more appropriate. The setting of response timeframes has been demonstrative of the importance of setting realistic, achievable goals. A balance needs to be struck between making goals challenging for the organization and avoiding overambitious goals which may set up the organization and its staff for failure.

1.3.4 Measures of compliance assistance activity

A key feature of EPA's reorganization is the emphasis that is being placed on compliance assistance as an alternative approach to bringing about source compliance. New measures have been proposed for compliance assistance activities conducted by headquarters or regional office staff. Reporting by states on their activities is voluntary. Activities at the federal level include, for example, distribution of sector-based compliance assistance materials that explain environmental regulations and discuss pollution prevention opportunities through various media such as brochures, training, seminars or computer-based expert systems. Activities could also include working as part of a compact with a trade association to involve the trade association in