

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

Impact of the aging of the population on agency services (§ 2.2-5510)

October 2006

The Department of Environmental Quality protects Virginia's air quality, water quality and land resources for the benefit of all Virginians. The agency does not provide services or activities that are designed specifically for seniors. It does, however, work to make sure information on agency programs and environmental conditions are readily accessible to seniors.

The following responds to the specific questions laid forth in § 2.2-5510 of the Code of Virginia:

1. The Department of Environmental Quality does not maintain information on the ages of Virginians who receive services from the agency.
2. DEQ's does not provide services or activities that are designed specifically for seniors.
3. All DEQ information programs are available to seniors. One program, air quality information and forecasting, falls under the health care/wellness category and is aimed directly at seniors and those with respiratory ailments. This program provides information on current and forecasted air quality conditions to affected residents in the Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, Richmond, Roanoke and Winchester areas. Because seniors may experience health effects from elevated levels of ozone and particle pollution, DEQ's program provides guidance on when air quality conditions are unhealthful and on what actions seniors can take to avoid exposure to the unhealthful conditions. The information is available through the agency website, email notifications and a telephone recording.
4. Consumer-oriented publications

DEQ currently does not provide publications specifically to seniors. However, the agency will evaluate alternatives for making key environmental and health-related information available in appropriate locations (such as hospitals, doctors' offices, etc.).

Senior-friendly web design

The DEQ website meets national and international standards for accessibility, which cover access by seniors and people with disabilities. Specific senior-friendly web design elements include:

- The website functions in text mode. This means users have full access to information when browsers are set to eliminate images and graphic elements.
- Fonts can be scaled effectively to larger sizes, based on instructions specific to each browser.
- Left-justified text improves readability for those with vision impairments.
- The website uses high contrast between text and background.
- The website provides a glossary of significant environmental terms.
- Frequent paragraph breaks separate content and improve readability.
- Consistent page design promotes ease of navigation and topic comprehension.
- The website uses a navigation scheme commonly found across the Internet.

- A site map enhances users' ability to locate material.
- A sans-serif font is used to improve screen readability.
- All-capital letters are avoided to improve readability.

5. No additional services are anticipated at this time.