

RiskCheck News

Recent amendments to the Ontario *Environmental Protection Act* and the *Ontario Water Resources Act* came into effect on October 31, 2011, which resulted in a two-path environmental approval process; the Environmental Activity and Sector Registry (EASR) process and Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) process.

The EASR allows a business to self-register online certain environmental activities instead of applying for Ministry approval. At present, these activities are limited to heating systems, standby power systems and automotive refinishing. There are some exemptions stated in O. Reg. 256/11 "*Environmental Compliance Approvals – Exemptions from Section 9 of the Act*" including building heating systems of less than 1.58 million kilojoules/hour. Activities that are not subject to the registration process, such as cooling towers, may require an ECA.

The ECA is a new instrument of environmental approval that replaces the Certificate of Approval process in Ontario. This approval is required for a facility to legally release air emissions and/or discharge contaminants to ground and surface water within the parameters as set out. The ECA addresses all emissions, discharges and wastes generated for a facility under a single document. Separate approvals for air, noise and wastes are no longer required under this process.

If you have an existing Certificate of Approval, the approval is considered to be valid and is treated as an ECA until a change in activity takes place that would result in amending your current approval. Activities that fall under the EASR process, for which a Certificate of Approval is currently held, have until October 31, 2016 to register under the EASR.

For more information and to access the EASR and ECA application, please view the Ontario Ministry of the Environment at the link below:

http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/industry/assessment_and_approvals/environmental_approvals/index.htm