

# Public Hearing

A public hearing is a meeting where people make comments and state opinions concerning a permit that is under consideration. Although the public hearing is not a question-and-answer format, it gives you and other interested parties an opportunity to provide comments concerning the permit.

All comments, both for and against, will be added to the public record and will be taken under consideration before issuing or denying the permit. DEQ will also respond to the comments in writing when the decision on the permit is finalized.

There are rules concerning how long and in what order people will get to speak. Basically, the speaking order and time limit are as follows:

- The Department must provide up to 30 minutes to the permit applicant for an introductory presentation.
- Citizens who live within a two-mile radius of the location of the facility will speak first.
- Citizens who work within a two-mile radius of the location of the facility will go second.
- Citizens who live within the parish of the location of the facility will be third.
- Thereafter, each hour of the hearing shall alternate between those who are in support of the permit action and those who are opposed to the permit action.

Registration forms will be available at the registration desks at the hearing location. You will be asked to fill out a speaker registration form to help us make sure you are allowed to speak at the appropriate time and to make sure we have your correct mailing address and contact information.

# The Difference

HEARING	MEETING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A public hearing is where comments from the public go into the public record.</li><li>• Some public hearings are required by regulations, while others are granted on a case-by-case basis.</li><li>• A public hearing is not a question-and-answer format.</li><li>• A public hearing is governed by rules concerning who speaks when &amp; for how long.</li><li>• A public hearing is overseen by a hearing official.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A public meeting is more of a discussion between interested parties and comments do not go into the public record.</li><li>• A public meeting is not required by law.</li><li>• A public meeting is a question-and-answer format.</li><li>• A public meeting is an open discussion with a DEQ moderator to make sure comments stay focused on the proposed permit and that everyone has a chance to ask his or her question.</li></ul>

# Public Meeting

A public meeting gives you the opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues concerning the permit under consideration with informed DEQ employees and others.

Public meetings are informal and there are no rules regarding who speaks when or for how long. DEQ does provide an official moderator to help keep the meeting focused on the permit issue at hand and to make sure each person has a chance to ask his/her question.

These meetings are set up so you can ask questions to DEQ or representatives from the facility seeking the permit. The goal of the meeting is to clear up any questions you may have and to help you become better informed. Although your comments will not be part of the public record, the format will allow you to provide information and discuss issues with DEQ and, in most cases, company officials.

Everyone should leave a public meeting with a better understanding of the permitting process and the issues and concerns of those for and against the proposed permit.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**AI NUMBER:** Agency Interest number. This is a number that helps DEQ track a permit. Having this number will make it easy for you to find information on a particular permit.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GROUP:** A section within DEQ that coordinates public involvement in permitting activities.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** A meeting where people can get their comments concerning a permit application into the public record. These comments are considered before issuing or denying a permit.

**PUBLIC MEETING:** A question and answer format where representatives from DEQ, the facility requesting the permit and the public can discuss issues concerning the permit.



## How It Works

Since your public hearing comments become part of the public record, your role in granting or denying a permit is an important one. DEQ wants to hear what you have to say.

The Department of Environmental Quality's permitting process is an open one. Much of the information you would like to see can be found on our website or by contacting our public records center. The public records center is located at 602 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Baton Rouge. The phone number is 225-219-3172.

**Written comments concerning a specific permit can be sent to:**

Public Participation Group  
P.O. Box 4313  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4313

These comments, along with those made at the public hearing, will become part of the official public record and will be considered during the permit decision-making process. You can also write the Public Participation Group to request a notification of the final permit decision. The final decision will be mailed to those who made comments, those who requested the decision, and the applicant. You can also get on the DEQ permit public notice mailing list so you will know about any public notices in the state. You can do this by mailing a request to the address above, by calling 225-219-3276 or by sending an email to [DEQ.PUBLICNOTICES@LA.GOV](mailto:DEQ.PUBLICNOTICES@LA.GOV).

Also, please visit the permit public notices website at [www.deq.louisiana.gov/public-notices](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/public-notices).

This brochure is designed to explain the differences between a public hearing and public meeting. It will also let you know how to get your comments into the public record.

## Contact Info

Permits.....225-219-3181  
DEQ Customer Service Center.... 225-219-LDEQ (5337)  
Toll Free 866-896-LDEQ (5337)  
DEQ Hotline.....225-219-3640  
Public Records.....225-219-3172



[www.deq.louisiana.gov](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov)

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**  
: YOUR OPINION MATTERS TO US