



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Virtual File Cabinet Public Portal: Frequently Asked Questions

www.idem.IN.gov

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What is VFC?

The Virtual File Cabinet (VFC) is IDEM's electronic digital image document repository system, that stores, files, indexes, redacts, reassembles and securely accesses electronic documents of all types both received and created by the various program areas within the agency.

How does the VFC work?

The VFC works like most Internet search engines where a search criterion is entered to find documents. Many documents are already available to the public in the VFC. Some documents may need to be requested and redacted prior to being released.

What kind of searches can I do in the VFC?

1. **Document Search:** A search that will return all documents with the selected index values used with specific information contained in a document pertaining to an action, an event, or of a regulated organization that is monitored by IDEM. It is also useful to know the identification index associated with the record that you are trying to locate. If you are not sure of any of the search terms you can refer to the glossary for an explanation of terms.
 - "Document Date" allows you to search for any documents that were published within a specific period of time. You have to enter a start but the end date is optional -- the search engine will return appropriate (although more numerous) results without both fields filled in.
 - "Program Area" refers to the IDEM program that published the document, select from the drop down list.



- “Document Type” is the kind of document you want to search for, such as an application, contract, monitoring, etc. Depending on the document type you choose, some additional search options may appear. Select from drop down list.

It is not necessary to fill-in all of the search fields. You can simply do a search for a document based on a single criterion and then view all of the results to find the best match. Filling in more information allows for a more refined search.

Note: There are currently nearly 5 million documents in the VFC. The search result limit is 1500 documents.

2. **Facility Search:** A search by name of regulated businesses or organizations.

- “Primary Name” is the name of the company, organization, or place under which the records were filed.
- “Location Address” is the street address of the company, organization, or place under which the records were filed.
- “City Name” is the city the company, organization, or place is located within and under which the records were filed.
- “County Name”, much like city name, is the county the company, organization, or place is located within and under which the records were filed.
- “Postal Code” is the postal ZIP code under which the records for the company, organization, or place were filed.

It is not necessary to fill-in all of the search fields. You can simply do a search for a company in the Facilities Search, and then view all of the results to find the best match.

What information do I need in order to search in the VFC?

It is recommended that you know the name of the facility, its street address, the IDEM program (OAQ – Office of Air Quality, OLQ – Office of Land Quality, or OWQ – Office of Water Quality) and/or the document date or date range of what you are trying to find. If there is a unique identifier like a PWSID#, Site#, HW or SW Program ID, etc., that would be ideal to have as well. (Note: It is possible to search for documents in the VFC without knowing all of this information.)



The following are required to view IDEM documents:

- Adobe Acrobat Reader Version 7.0 or greater - <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
- Java Run-time Environment (JRE) –
 - For Internet Explorer go to: http://www.java.com/en/download/inc/windows_upgrade_ie.jsp

The following are recommended:

- Windows XP or newer Operating System (OS) or MAC OS X or newer
- Pentium 4 or AMD Dual Core or better processor
- 1 gigabyte of RAM
- At least 40% of free space on the hard drive
- Cable or DSL internet service (high speed) is highly suggested

What internet browser should I use, when accessing the Virtual File Cabinet (VFC)?

The VFC is best utilized with Microsoft® Internet Explorer, including Internet Explorer 8. Other browsers have been known to have issues when viewing documents.

Why does it take so long for a document to load in the VFC?

There are several factors that can affect download speed in VFC: size of the document being retrieved, number of people in VFC trying to access documents, customers utilizing the state network, the download speed of your internet connection and the amount of data that your Internet Service Provider might permit or limit you to download in any given amount of time.

What can cause a document to stop downloading half way through?

This could be an indication that the server has timed out. Timing out happens when the internet browser does not receive a response from the host sever within a given amount of time. Remember that when viewing a document, the VFC loads that entire document into a temporary file before viewing can occur.

After I download a document and I try to view it, I get a red X in the upper left corner of the view area of the document. Why?

This is an indication that your computer has a Java software problem. The cause of this could be either you do not have Java installed on your PC, or the Java software needs to be updated. You can get the Java software and updates at www.JAVA.com or you should contact your company's Information Technology office.



I did a search in VFC and I received a message that said 0 documents found. What do I do?

There may be, in fact, no documents in the VFC for your particular search. You should also try using a different search available in the VFC, either the Document Search or the Facility Search. In addition, try using the wild card symbols % or *. If you are using the %, be sure to place the symbol before and after the search criteria you enter in the search boxes. If you still have problems please contact the Public Records Office.

What is the difference between View and Request?

- View – The associated document is publically available in its current form. By clicking on View you will be able to view, print and/or save the document in its entirety.
- Request – The document must be reviewed by IDEM staff and to determine whether any portion of the record or the record in its entirety is exempted from public disclosure by the Indiana Access to Public Records Act Indiana Code 5-14-3-4. See <http://www.in.gov/idem/6551.htm> for additional information.

Index Glossary

- **AI ID** – Agency Interest ID – You may contact the Public Records Office assistance.
- **CFO/CAFO#** – Confined Feeding Operation/Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation Farm ID number.
- **FID** – Facility Identification Number – Used for all Underground Storage Tank (UST) and Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) information.
- **HW PROGRAM ID** – Used for all Hazardous Waste Permit documents. This is the EPA ID number that every Hazardous Waste Facility receives.
- **INCIDENT#** - Is used in conjunction with the FID# for most or all of Underground Storage Tank (UST), Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) and Excess Liability Trust Fund (ELTF).
- **NPDES#** – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System – Include “IN” at the beginning of each number.
- **PWSID#** – Public Water Supply Identification Number – Used for all Drinking Water records.
- **SITE#** – Remediation Services Branch Sources – Used by Site Investigations, State Cleanup, Superfund, Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) and the Voluntary Remediation Program (VRP), as well as by Brownfields. There is a variety of number variations. You may contact the Public Records Office for assistance.
- **SOURCEID** – All Air Permitted sources – Enter the first and last portion of the permit number. For example if the permit is 123-4567-8910, then only 123-8910 needs to be entered.
- **SW PROGRAM ID** – Used for all Solid Waste Facility documents, which include SW Landfills, SW Processing Facilities, Compost Sites and Waste Tire Sites. This number is also used for Biosolids documents and will be used for Septage documents when those are put into VFC.



Glossary of Terms

- **Agency Interest Identification (AI ID)** – A unique identification number that is generated by the system that is assigned to an agency interest.
- **Agency Interest** – Any entity that is being regulated or is of interest to the agency. An agency interest may be a site, facility, mobile source, area source, person or an organization.
- **Confined Feeding Operation/Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CFO/CAFO)** – Confined feeding is the raising of animals for food, fur or recreation in lots, pens, ponds, sheds or buildings, where they are confined, fed and maintained for at least 45 days during any year, and where there is no ground cover or vegetation present over at least half of the animals' confinement area. Livestock markets and sale barns are generally excluded.

Indiana law defines a confined feeding operation as any animal feeding operation engaged in the confined feeding of at least 300 cattle, 500 horses, or 600 swine or sheep, or 30,000 fowl, such as chickens, turkeys or other poultry. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) regulates these confined feeding operations, as well as smaller operations which have violated water pollution rules or laws, under IC 13-18-10, the Confined Feeding Control Law. IDEM's Office of Land Quality administers the regulatory program which includes permitting, compliance monitoring and enforcement activities. IDEM regulation 327 IAC 16 regulating confined feeding was adopted by the Water Pollution Control Board on November 14, 2001 and became effective on March 10, 2002.

Due to size or historical compliance issues some confined feeding operations are defined as concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). The CAFO general permit regulation, 327 IAC 15-15 and the individual permit regulation 327 IAC 5-4-3 were adopted on Jan. 14, 2004 and went into effect on March 24, 2004. The CAFO regulations are based upon a U.S. EPA Clean Water Act regulation that went into effect in December, 2003. For purposes of discussion, it is important to remember that all CAFOs are confined feeding operations. The CAFO regulation however, contains more stringent operational requirements and slightly different application requirements.

Details regarding CAFOs will follow the description of requirements for confined feeding operations. For more information please refer to the IDEM website at <http://www.in.gov/idem/4994.htm#what>

- **Document** – Please see definition for record.
- **Document Number** – A unique number given to each document that is entered into the VFC. This number can be entered into the upper right-hand corner of any search screen.
- **Document Search** – The search method to use if a certain index is known to input as a search criteria.
- **Facility Identification Number (FID)** – IDEM assigns a unique number to each facility that contains a regulated underground storage tank (UST). When IDEM receives an UST Notification for a new facility from the UST owner, it assigns a sequential number to that facility. The FID# does not change if there is a new owner or the UST's are closed.



- **Facility Search** – The search method to use when the only search criteria known is name, address or county. Currently this is not the preferred search method.
- **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)** – This a permit that places limits on the amount of pollutants that may be discharged to waters of the State by each discharger. These limits are set at levels protective of both the aquatic life in the waters which receive the discharge and protective of human health. For more information please refer to the IDEM website at <http://www.in.gov/idem/4894.htm>.
- **Public Water Supply Identification Number (PWSID #)** – A unique federal identifying code for a public water system used at the federal and state level to track regulatory information about the system. It consists of a two-letter state code (IN) followed by seven digits. The seven digits include information such as a number code for the county a system is located in as well as code for the type of system (community or non-community).
- **Record** – In the VFC, a record is referring to a public record, which is defined as any writing, paper, report, study, map, photograph, book, card, tape recording or other material that is created, received, retained, maintained or filed by or with a public agency and which is generated on paper, paper substitutes, photographic media, chemically based media, magnetic or machine readable media, electronically stored data or any other material, regardless of form or characteristics. (IC 5-14-3-2 (n))
- **Redaction** – The act of selecting or adapting (as by obscuring or removing sensitive information) for publication or release.
- **Repository** – A place where something is deposited or stored. The VFC is considered a “Document Repository.”
- **SOURCE ID** – When performing a document search in the VFC this index is referring to only a portion of the four (4) part tracking number used by IDEM, Office of Air Quality further described below. It is important to note that when entering a Source ID into the value box for this index, it is only necessary to enter the second and forth portions of the tracking number.

The tracking number that is used by IDEM, OAQ to identify each permit consists of four (4) parts. First is a letter code associated with the permit level: R for Registration, M for Minor Source Operating Permit (MSOP), F for Federally Enforceable State Operating Permit (FESOP), and T for a Title V (Part 70) permit. The next part is a 3-digit number corresponding to the county where the source is located (e.g., 001 for Adams County and 183 for Whitley County). The third number is either a 4- or 5-digit number that corresponds to the air permit. Lastly, there is a 5-digit number code that is associated with the source (i.e., company) that holds the air permit. Each source in the county will have a different source identification number. This number preceded by the 3-digit county code is the plant ID or source ID.

