

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) at Sandia National Laboratories (SNL)

***We do not inherit the earth
from our ancestors, we
borrow it from our children.
~Native American Proverb***

What is NEPA?

NEPA is the federal legislation passed in 1970 that requires the government to consider the environmental impacts of its decisions. NEPA requires federal agencies and private entities that perform federally-sponsored projects to include environmental aspects in early project planning and decision-making. A major intent of the law is to ensure that federal agencies are aware of the potential environmental impacts associated with their operations and include this information in early project planning and decision making.

When do I perform a NEPA Review?

A NEPA Compliance Review is required for all federally-funded proposed actions, including privately funded actions performed on federal facilities. In effect, NEPA applies to all SNL activities performed on private and government properties. This requirement also applies to SNL projects performed in international settings, where the role of SNL researchers, and potential environmental issues associated with SNL activities, must be documented in a NEPA Compliance Review. Early in the planning for a proposed project, the project lead, or their designate, must input enough information into the electronic Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS) NEPA Module, so that SNL's NEPA Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) can determine whether the proposed work is within the

existing environmental analyses of SNL operations, or whether the review must be submitted to Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration/Sandia Site Office (DOE/NNSA/SSO) for review and determination.



View of Sandia Mountains from SNL/NM

What actions “trigger” NEPA?

New proposed actions, such as new project activities, equipment, or funding, require NEPA coverage. Modified actions, including facility, major equipment upgrades, changes in location, technology, or waste streams, also trigger NEPA reviews.



National Environmental Policy Act



Administration Building at SNL/NM

Cultural Resources and NEPA

At SNL, cultural resources compliance is coordinated through the NEPA Program. Actions that could adversely affect cultural resources are initially analyzed in a NEPA checklist. Examples of such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Construction of new buildings or facilities,
- Modification of internal or external portions of existing structures,
- Projects that require grading or excavation, particularly if the project is located outside a Technical Area (TA) fence,
- Maintenance and cleanup activities that might result in inadvertent collection and destruction of historic artifacts.

Historic properties, as defined by the National Historic Preservation Act and implementing regulations, include archaeological sites, historic buildings, and structures. Historic buildings and structures may include those over 50 years old that are historically significant, or younger structures of exceptional significance.

How do I Comply with NEPA at SNL?

Visit <http://www-irn.sandia.gov/esh/nepa/> if you need more information about NEPA at SNL.



Fox at Kirtland Air Force Base, NM

