

1.1.3 THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

All American environmental activity revolves around this agency. With almost 18,000 employees in 1993, and an annual budget of \$7 billion, it oversees the implementation of a multitude of programs that run under the authority of the environmental laws passed by Congress and approved by the President. The Agency is responsible for general policy and for the implementation of U.S environmental legislation and regulations. It is also responsible for practical activities, including for example the preparation of the technical and chemical standards which companies must comply with. Through its 10 regional offices, where almost two-thirds of EPA employees work, the Agency works closely with the states, with local governments and with local groups to apply national legislation and regulations. The remaining third of its employees, located mainly in Washington D.C., see to the implementation of policies and programs and the development of research.

The EPA is thus the heart and the motor of the entire environmental standards framework in the United States.

1.1.4 THE REGULATORY PROCESS

The national environmental laws are supplemented by federal regulations administered by the EPA. The main laws and regulations of concern to us here, those dealing with industrial wastewater, come under the heading "Wastewater Discharges":