

## Air and water pollution control guidelines, 2025 released

The Central Government has recently introduced the Control of Air Pollution (Grant, Refusal, or Cancellation of Consent) Guidelines, 2025 and the Control of Water Pollution (Grant, Refusal, or Cancellation of Consent) Guidelines, 2025, marking a significant shift in how industries obtain and renew their environmental clearances. These guidelines, released on 29th and 30th January 2025, respectively, aim to strike a balance between industrial expansion and environmental responsibility.

### Streamlining the consent process

One of the most notable aspects of the new guidelines is the introduction of a common consent mechanism. This enables industries to apply for consent under the Air and Water Acts, along with hazardous waste management authorization, through a unified process. This move simplifies compliance, reduces bureaucratic delays, and enhances transparency.

To further expedite the process, a centralized online portal has been set up, allowing businesses to track their applications and receive timely approvals. The stipulated timelines ensure that the State Pollution Control Boards ('SPCB's) decide on applications within a fixed period. If an SPCB fails to act within the designated timeframe, the matter is escalated to State Level Monitoring Committee, which is mandated to deliver a decision within 30 days.

### Clarity on fee structure and validity periods

The guidelines provide a structured fee regime, with state governments authorised to set consent fees within prescribed limits. Any fee revision is capped at 10% and can only occur once in two years. As an incentive for timely compliance, industries applying for renewal at least four months before expiration receive a 5% rebate on the fees, while late applicants face increasing penalties based on the delay period.

The validity of consent varies by industry category:

Consent to establish is valid for 5 years from the date of its grant (extendable to 2 more years on application)

Consent to operate shall be valid from the date of its grant till the period given below

- **Red category industries:** 5 years
- **Orange category industries:** 10 years
- **Green category industries:** 15 years
- **Blue category industries:** 17 years

For new industrial units, the Consent to Establish ('CTE') is valid for five years, extendable by two years, allowing a maximum of seven years.

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### Stricter compliance and environmental safeguards

While the guidelines provide industries with a structured and predictable framework, they also impose strict compliance measures to prevent pollution. SPCBs are authorized to refuse or cancel consent if an industry fails to:

- Meet prescribed location criteria, especially in proximity to water bodies, residential areas, and ecologically sensitive zones.
- Maintain pollution control measures and adhere to emission or effluent discharge standards.
- Report modifications in processes that could impact pollution levels.
- Pay statutory fees, environmental compensation, or furnish required bank guarantees.
- Prevent accidental discharges or environmental damage.

### Inspections and monitoring

To ensure compliance, SPCBs may conduct site visits and inspections. The guidelines mandate prior notice to industries before inspections, ensuring transparency in enforcement. Additionally, industries in certain categories must install continuous emission monitoring systems ('CEMS') for real-time pollution tracking.

#### Air Consent Guidelines:

[https://egazette.gov.in/\(S\(jdenhcwmpsfny45mbprea0z4\)\)/ViewPDF.aspx](https://egazette.gov.in/(S(jdenhcwmpsfny45mbprea0z4))/ViewPDF.aspx)

## Weblink

#### Water Consent Guidelines:

[https://egazette.gov.in/\(S\(5gzcOnodvbqhsyuuai4u02ll\)\)/ViewPDF.aspx](https://egazette.gov.in/(S(5gzcOnodvbqhsyuuai4u02ll))/ViewPDF.aspx)

## Therefore

### A positive step for industries and the environment

The 2025 guidelines reflect a shift towards a more predictable and efficient regulatory framework. They provide industries with clear expectations while reinforcing the government's commitment to environmental sustainability. With digitized application processes, clear timelines, and structured compliance requirements, these reforms are poised to benefit both businesses and the environment. For industries, the key takeaway is clear: proactive compliance and timely applications will not only ensure smoother operations but also minimize regulatory hurdles. As environmental governance tightens, embracing these measures will be crucial for long-term industrial sustainability and public health protection.