

For Your Environmental Protection

Something needed to be done. That was becoming more and more evident every day. By the turn of the 20th century, massive cities and huge industrial centers were dominating the landscape. For the first time in history, people weren't complete victims to the laws of nature. In fact, it was nature that was being kicked around by man.

The turn in the tables was obvious in the years following World War II. Millions of automobiles were releasing exhaust into the atmosphere, thousands of acres of forests were being leveled for new construction, and industrial waste was being produced faster than it was being disposed of. People began to take notice of the negative side effects of increasing development. A few even suggested that someone – or something – had to step in before the environment was completely destroyed.

In 1962, a woman named Rachel Carson made the environment front page news. Her novel *Silent Spring* attacked the irresponsible use of pesticides, and pointed out the long-term affects on the environment. Carson's critics claimed that she was just exaggerating and trying to start a panic. If that was the case, she certainly succeeded.

The environment was officially a hot topic. When Richard Nixon became president in 1969, the environment was one of the leading issues on his plate. For that reason, he didn't waste any time in establishing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which began operation on December 2, 1970. The EPA was responsible for researching the environment and setting up safe guidelines for industrial growth. It was also given the authority to create, monitor, and enforce environmental legislation.

Since its creation, the EPA has been closely involved with all environmental concerns in the United States – air, water, and land. In recent years, one of its main focuses has been to develop a plan against environmental terrorism, which can come in the form of a chemical, biological, or radiological attack.

Fast Fact!!!

The Environmental Protection Agency is a huge organization with 18,000 employees, 10 regional offices, and 17 research labs across the country. Over half of its employees are engineers, scientists, or environmental experts. There are also hundreds of legal experts who practice environmental law.