

**B. Designate an Environmental Certifying Officer (ECO)**

The Grantee's Chief Executive Officer must designate either him/herself or a competent staff person to serve as the Environmental Certifying Officer (ECO). The ECO must be:

- designated in writing. See sample form in Appendix 2 Chapter 10. A copy of the designation must be kept in the ERR file.
- an employee of the municipality. The ECO may not be a person or entity with whom the municipality contracts to carry out project activities. *The ECO acts as the responsible Federal official under the provisions of NEPA and will be named as the responsible party in any legal action.*

Responsibilities of the ECO include making findings and signing all required certifications. The ECO does not need to be a technical expert on environmental activities but should be credible if it becomes necessary for the grantee to defend a finding or conclusion of the review.

**C. Define the project**

While the definition does not have to be lengthy, it should include enough information to provide the reader with a clear understanding of what is to take place. This should include all project activities, the location of the project and the anticipated cost of the project. The description should not be isolated in time and place and must consider future related actions, cumulative effects and activities associated with non-HUD funds.

**D. Determine the Level of Environmental Review Required for Each Activity**

Each program activity which is or will be funded by Mass. CDBG must be reviewed for its impact on the environment. In addition, all activities which are part of a federally funded project must be reviewed even if the particular activity receives no federal funds.

The levels of environmental review are as follows:

- Exempt activities (58.34)
- Categorically Excluded Activities Not Subject to Section 58.5
- Categorically Excluded Activities Subject to Section 58.5 [Statutory review, 58.35(b)]
- Full Environmental Assessment Required Activities [NEPA review, 58.35(a)]

Each review category is fully detailed below. Defining the correct level of review is a critical step. Grantees must be sure that they are categorizing a project correctly. An incorrect determination for the level of review can lead to delays or a discontinuation of project activities