

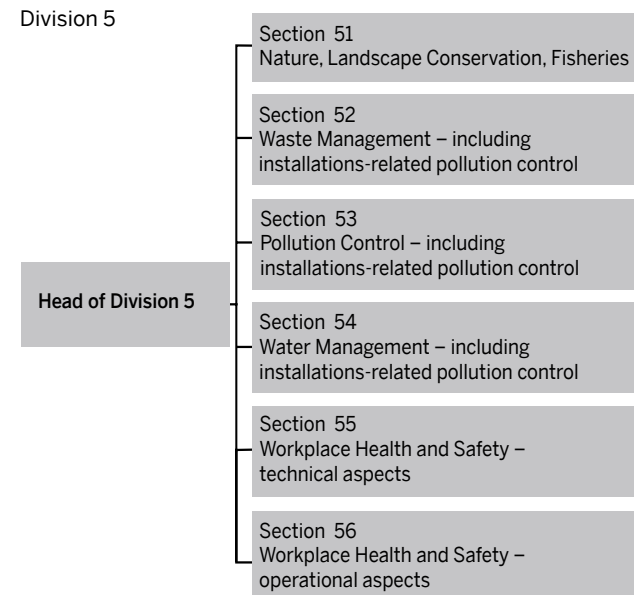
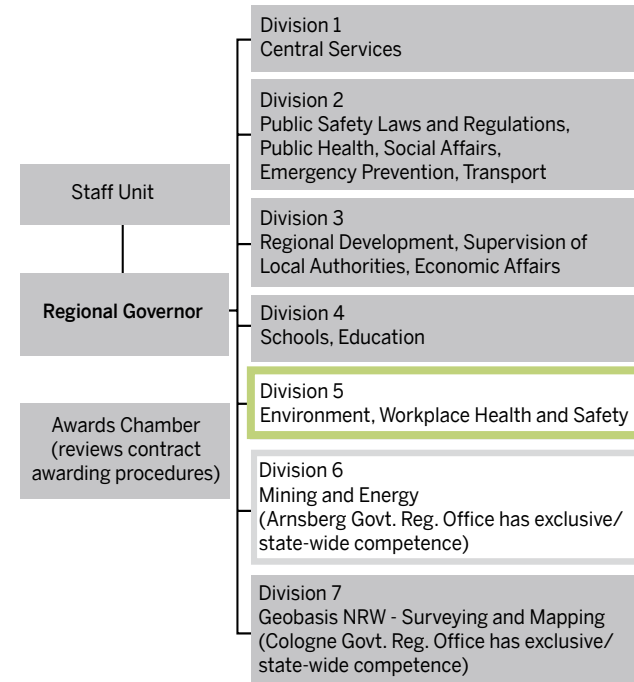
Section 55 and 56 – The Workplace Health and Safety Sections

Sections 55 and 56 are responsible for workplace health and safety in some 180,000 firms with approx. 1.4 million employees in the Cologne regional government district.

Section 55 supports companies in workplace health and safety-related administrative procedures in the fields of operating safety, radiological protection and explosives – throughout the entire process from filing an application through to the final decision and notification. The responsibilities of Section 55 for instance include granting licences for dealing with radioactive material or explosives, and processing notifications of putting into service medical X-ray installations. Monitoring compliance with regulations governing radiological protection and safe handling of explosives is another priority of Section 55. In addition, the section is concerned with market supervision (the putting on the market of products), monitoring compliance with regulations governing working hours of professional drivers and transport safety with a special focus on the transport of dangerous goods. Section 55 is also involved in licensing procedures under construction safety and pollution control legislation.

Section 56 is concerned with maternity protection, youth employment protection and health and safety for persons employed in homework, plant and operational safety, regulation of working hours, chemicals safety, safe handling of biological substances, workplace design and ergonomics, safety on construction sites, physical hazards due to noise, vibration and laser radiation, psychological stress, and - against a background of demographic change – working conditions tailored to the needs of an ageing workforce. Under the Workplace Health and Safety Act, employers are obliged to plan and implement, on their own responsibility, adequate workplace health and safety measures and to check their effectiveness on the basis of risk assessments as also prescribed by the Act. Section 56 monitors compliance with those requirements and offers advice to companies in a move to help them ensure a consistent and effective workplace health and safety system. When it comes to more complex tasks, the section, with a view to pooling competence, sets up temporary networks in co-operation with other stakeholders such as the Chambers of Industry and Commerce or Handicrafts, employers' associations and trade unions, or industrial injury insurance providers.

Organisational Chart



We are there to help you

Be it conservation, the preservation and protection of the environment or workplace health and safety: Division 5 of the Cologne Government Regional Office performs a wide range of tasks and is a competent partner to whom you can turn for advice and support in all these matters

Are you interested to learn more about the work of the Cologne Government Regional Office? We will be happy to send you more detailed information – just give us a call or email us:

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Protecting the Region. Making the Workplace Safe and Secure.

Division 5: A Brief Outline



Section 51 – The Conservation and Fisheries Section

The terms of reference of Section 51 comprise conservation and fisheries. In its capacity as the Higher Nature and Land Conservation and Fisheries Authority, the responsibilities of Section 51 in particular include the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives, the designation of nature reserves and landscape protection areas, and monitoring and supervision of planning and projects by way of regulation of interventions in nature and the landscape and environmental impact assessments.

Other functions include funding measures in the fields of nature and landscape conservation and fisheries, reviewing landscape plans, ensuring conservation of species, and monitoring and supervising the preservation and management of fish stocks.



Section 52 – The Waste Management Section – including installations-related pollution control

Section 52 licenses and supervises waste treatment facilities (except for waste incineration plants) that are subject to licensing under the Federal Pollution Control Act (BlmSchG), and all category II, III, and IV landfill sites. In addition, Section 52 establishes the relevant facts and figures needed for waste management planning and secure waste disposal in the Cologne regional government district, thus supporting the Environment Ministry in drawing up the waste management plans for North Rhine-Westphalia.

Large-scale waste treatment centres, the region's proximity to the Netherlands and Belgium plus a well-developed transport infrastructure are factors that combine to result in extensive transfers of waste in the Cologne district. In addition to supervising cross-border movements of waste including notifications, the Government Regional Office has responsibility for the national electronic waste register and for monitoring waste streams.

In all these fields, the Government Regional Office co-operates closely with the counties and unincorporated cities in the district. Together with the local authorities, the Government Regional Office prepares and implements preventive soil protection measures and allocates funds for local projects geared towards identifying and preventing risks in cases of suspected harmful impacts on the soil and contaminated sites.



Section 53: The Pollution Control Section – including installations-related pollution control

Section 53 licenses and supervises particularly hazardous installations, waste incineration plants, and other industrial installations that are of special relevance under EU legislation. Under the Federal Pollution Control Act, the construction and operation of industrial plants as well as substantial modifications to such plants are subject to official authorisation and monitoring.

Moreover, an environmental impact assessment has to be made as part of certain installations licensing procedures. Operators of installations that are subject to the Hazardous Incidents Ordinance have to comply with additional obligations that are designed to prevent or limit the effects of hazardous incidents and hence to help ensure public health and safety.

In addition, Section 53 supervises genetic engineering installations and field tests involving genetically modified organisms, and it draws up Clean Air Plans when there is an imminent danger that emission limits applicable throughout Europe might be exceeded.



Section 54: The Water Management Section – including installations-related pollution control

In Section 54, it is all about water: reviewing sewage disposal schemes, licensing waste water treatment plants, dams, and flood protection installations, granting consents to discharge waste water or to withdraw groundwater or surface water, designating flood zones and water protection zones to secure public water supply. Moreover, the terms of reference of Section 54 include implementing of the EU Water Framework Directive and the EU Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks, and monitoring uses of bodies of water and installations. Section 54 also allocates government funds towards flood control schemes and programmes to return brooks and rivers in the district to a semi-natural state. Another priority task is the development and management of the river Sieg as a body of water of the highest category under the North Rhine-Westphalia Water (Management) Act. In addition, Section 54 keeps the „Water Register“ which records ownership and other rights in relation to bodies of water and which can be inspected by anyone without any obligation to state a reason.

