

# Agricultural Operation Planning Certificate (AOPC) Performance Guidelines

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## Who Needs an Agricultural Operation Planning certificate (AOPC)?

You need an AOPC if you are preparing a Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS) and/or Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) for an agricultural operation that you own, operate or are employed by.

The laws that relate to nutrient application are:

- the Nutrient Management Act, 2002 (NMA)
- Ontario Regulation 267/03 (O. Reg 267/03)
- the associated Protocols

The skills and knowledge you need to prepare your own NMS/P are outlined in the Core Competencies for the Agricultural Operation Planning Certificate document, which you can find at [www.nutrientmanagement.ca](http://www.nutrientmanagement.ca).

## What are Performance Guidelines?

The performance guidelines go beyond the legal requirements and core competencies of your AOPC – they provide consistent best management practices and describe the ways that OMAFRA expects you to conduct yourself in the development, submission, review and application of your NMS and NMP.

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## Performance Guidelines for AOPC Holders

### General

1. Stay up-to-date and continue to learn about nutrient management and related legislation (e.g. *Environmental Protection Act*, *Ontario Water Resources Act*)
2. Clearly understand where professional (i.e. Consulting, engineering or geotechnical assistance) services are required.
3. Use best management practices to minimize adverse effects.
4. Ensure the information in your NMS/P is accurate and up-to-date.
5. Be aware that you are obligated to report serious contravention of the NMA and related Acts and Regulations (e.g., the *Environmental Protection Act*, and the *Ontario Water Resources Act*) to the proper authority.

### Guidelines for the Development of NMS/Ps

1. Ensure the NMS/P is practical and effective, and can be followed on your farm operation.

2. Coordinate information gathering with project partners (e.g. Chief Building Officials, Conservation Authorities, engineers, contractors).
3. Ensure the information in the NMS/P is consistent and accurate throughout (i.e. roll and lot numbers, field and farm names).
4. Before submitting an NMS/P for review, ensure the NMS/P is:
  - a. accurate and that values match throughout the document;
  - b. comprehensive, containing all the required information;
  - c. includes contact information for all certified or licenced service providers (brokers, land applicators, engineers, geoscientists);
  - d. includes a realistic contingency plan that reflects the farm operation and properly predicts possible environmental issues, and may reduce an adverse effect requiring remediation or action;
  - e. reflective of the agronomic conditions and ongoing practices of the farm operation, including the management of environmental risks or vulnerabilities (e.g. soil type(s), slopes, depth to bedrock);
  - f. presented in a neat, organized and consistent fashion;
  - g. properly signed.
5. Understand your personal responsibility and liability when signing a NMS/P that you have prepared.
6. Ensure the NMS/P follows all provincial legislation and practices (e.g. Building Code).

### **Guidelines for Implementation of NMS/Ps**

1. Keep thorough, accurate and dated records of all activities.
2. Perform annual updates before February 15.
3. Adhere to agronomic and environmental best practices as outlined in the NMS/P and under provincial legislation (e.g. calibrate equipment properly, adhere to required setbacks and application timing).
4. Provide complete and accurate information to all regulating authorities.
5. Make employees, receivers, brokers and land applicators aware of the potential consequences of not complying with the NMA and related regulations.

#### **For more information:**

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