

Business Pollution Prevention Fact sheet

Newcastle's growing population and the industrial nature of our business sector are placing increasing pressure on our local air quality. To counter this all business and residents must reduce air pollution whenever they can.



Dust

Air pollution in the form of dust comes from a variety of sources. Construction sites, unsealed driveways, material stockpiles, sanding and grinding processes and the loading and unloading of loose materials can all produce significant quantities of air borne particles. This dust can be detrimental to our health and to the environment. Utilising some simple techniques can reduce dust;

Eliminate potential dust sources by minimising disturbed areas, avoiding double handling of dusty materials and reducing on-site stockpiles.

Minimise dust-generating activities during periods of high wind and on dry days. Consult the weather forecasts and keep a close eye on the current weather conditions so you can plan your work appropriately.

Control dust generation. For example;

- Wind fencing – unsealed areas, storage areas and loading bays should be enclosed with hessian fencing to reduce wind velocity
- Water use – keep the surface of unsealed areas and stockpiles moist when high winds are expected
- Mulch – un-vegetated non-traffic areas should be covered
- Temporary cover crops – rapid growing grasses to cover stockpiles and un-vegetated areas.
- Chemical stabilisation – forms a crust on the unsealed surface or stockpile.
- Speed reduction – slow moving vehicles generate considerably less dust.

Odour

The emission of odour generates a large number of residential complaints each year. A “bad smell” is often all the public will remember about a business. Odour can be reduced and community relationships improved by utilising a few simple techniques;

Eliminate odour producing activities and materials where possible. There may be commercially available alternatives for a particular odorous material.

Minimise the impact of odour on neighbouring properties. For example;

- Odorous activities or equipment can be sited behind structures acting as barriers, so that odour emissions are not directed towards any sensitive areas or so that maximum dilution will occur before reaching them.
- A stand of trees or shrubs can help to disperse odour before it reaches the boundary of a facility and to reduce the wind over an odour source (e.g. an effluent pond).
- Odorous activities or the use of odour-generating equipment can be conducted during the least sensitive time of day or under the most favourable weather conditions.
- Cover odorous materials with tarps, mulch or soil.

- Where a number of odorous processes operate on a site, it may be possible to schedule them so they happen separately rather than concurrently.
- Equipment with the potential to generate fumes or odours should be properly maintained.
- Education programs can be conducted to educate staff about the impacts of odour and using work practices that minimise odour.
- Potentially affected neighbours can be consulted and informed about what is proposed, the controls you have in place and who to contact for concerns and enquires (e.g. conducting a letterbox drop before carrying out a particularly odorous activity).

Control odour-producing processes with odour reduction equipment such as masking agents, neutralising agents, stacks, incinerators, condensers, scrubbers and filters. Ensure you are using the best equipment for your business. Your local “Environmental Consultant” can help you choose the best equipment.

Smog

What we commonly call smog is actually a combination of air pollutants reacting together, which have serious health and environmental effects. The major cause of smog is vehicle exhaust, although the outputs from light industry and commercial sources are increasing. We all use vehicles in our business so we can all reduce air pollution in some way. For example;

- Ensure your fleet cars are regularly serviced and are in good working order. Vehicles that do not burn fuel efficiently are costing you money. Did you know it is an offence for a vehicle to emit visible smoke continuously for a period of more than ten seconds.
- Reduce the number of trips made each day by planning and completing multiple tasks each trip.
- Encourage your employees to car pool by offering incentives.
- Explore viable alternatives for fleet cars. Hybrid electric vehicles and those which use some alternative fuels, such as compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) are much better for the environment.

Acknowledgments: EPA Draft Policy: Assessment and Management of Odour from Stationary Sources in NSW

