

TOOLBOX TALK NO.10 ENVIRONMENTAL - DUST & FUMES



Each year thousands of construction workers contract or die from respiratory diseases due to breathing in dust or fumes.

Construction work can affect the environment in a number of ways however they can also lead to wider regional or global issues. Typical pollutants that cause local environmental impacts to the atmosphere are dust and fumes.

Many materials or products, such as sealants or resins, when used in a work environment may release vapours, fumes or odours. These can damage the environment and be hazardous to the health of workers or other persons. The likelihood of such hazards must be assessed and adequate control measures designed and implemented that include appropriate monitoring arrangements.

Mud from construction work has the potential to damage the environment. In wet weather it can enter surface watercourses and drains. In dry weather it can dry out and, as dust, become airborne with the potential to be carried some distance. Mud can be controlled using road sweepers and by dampening down during dry weather.

Silica is a constituent of sand and many construction activities produce high concentrations of silica dust. Work including concrete drilling, scabbling, chasing, cutting and sand or grit blasting techniques can create large volumes of dust. Clouds of dust do not restrict themselves to the construction site but may migrate and contaminate the environment around the site.

Managing dust:

- Put control measures in place to mitigate any negative dust impacts including:
- Dampening down of haul routes with water
- Ensuring public highways are regularly swept
- Installing wheel-washing equipment at site exits where appropriate.
- Ensuring that bulk materials leaving site are covered
- Installing dust screens or silt fencing to prevent dust spreading
- Using water, where possible, in cutting and grinding work to suppress dust.
- Ensuring that bulk materials likely to cause dust are covered where appropriate.



Avoid impact on ecology: Dust can damage the ecology of a watercourse and affect plant growth, including crops.

DOs	DON'Ts
✓ Keepsurfacesweptanddampdown withwaterat regularintervals ✓ Minimisedropheightsintohaulage vehiclesand ontoconveyors ✓ Ensurecuttingandgrindingoperations areadequately shieldedorwetted ✓ DOsheetlorriescarryingdrymaterials offsite ✓ Use the wheel wash, for appropriate vehicles, if one is provided on site. ✓ DO store fine, dry materials within buildings or provide adequate protection from the wind. ✓ Storebulk cementand bentonitein silos ✓ DO position silos and stockpiles away from residential areas or watercourses. ✓ Clean up or damp down any spillage of dry, dusty materials ✓ Notify your Line Manager if work activities are causing poor air quality	✗ DON'T burn materials on site without approval from your Project Manager. Permission is required first from the Environment Agency. ✗ DON'T use poorly maintained plant. Black smoke may give rise to poor health and can cause a nuisance ✗ DON'T leave plant running if not in use ✗ DON'T ignore sources of poor air quality, notify your line manager. ✗ DON'T ignore complaints



ALL CONCERNS SHOULD BE RAISED WITH YOUR SITE MANAGER IMMEDIATELY