

Dirt and dust from construction

Dust from construction work can be a nuisance to neighbours and interfere with normal daily activities. If severe enough, it can impact on people's health. This fact sheet includes information that can help residents and the building industry to reduce dust emissions and meet legal requirements.

Be a good neighbour

If work such as excavating, building or landscaping is planned, it may be helpful to discuss this with neighbours beforehand. A sign on site with contact details, or distribution of leaflets, may help prevent complaints.

The law

The *Environmental Protection Act* includes controls for dust nuisances. Council of the City of Gold Coast (Council) is legally required to enforce these controls. If issues between neighbours cannot be resolved and further complaints are made, an investigation will be carried out.

If the dust is determined to be a nuisance, Council may issue the offender with a Direction Notice. This notice will detail the offence and the time frame to resolve the problem. Non-compliance may result in an on-the-spot fine to the value of 15 penalty units (for an individual) or 75 penalty units (for a corporation). See the City website for information about penalty unit values.

It is important to note that there may be other government agencies responsible for regulating dust from certain premises.

The criteria

When investigating a dust complaint, Council will consider:

- the amount of dust being emitted
- the duration and rate of emission and the dust's characteristics and qualities
- the sensitivity of the environment into which the dust is being emitted and the impact that it has or may have
- views of any other neighbours or complainants
- other relevant criteria.

For more information

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E mail@goldcoast.qld.gov.au
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Ways to reduce dust emissions

Retaining vegetation

Retain as many plants and as much grass on the site as possible. Strips of grass can act as dust barriers to neighbouring properties. Even low or small amounts of vegetation can significantly lower wind speed and reduce the amount of dust leaving a site.

Work plan

Plan what work needs to be done. Try to carry out work in stages so some vegetation can be left as barriers as stages are completed.

Using on-site waste

Try using any on-site waste as dust barriers. For example, unused sheeting or roofing could be used as temporary dust barriers, or green waste could be mulched and spread on the ground to protect the topsoil layer.

Physical barriers

Physical barriers such as fences can be very effective when used properly. Material such as shade cloth could be erected as a dust fence around the work area. It is important to consider the location, height and width of fences prior to construction. Most importantly, check the wind direction.

Water

Spraying water onto topsoil can be very effective in reducing dust. It is important that enough water is used to keep the topsoil layer damp and that spraying is completed before strong breezes develop.

Hydromulch products

For larger areas, products such as hydromulch could be useful. Hydromulch consists of recycled, pulped newspaper that has been mixed with water and can be sprayed onto the ground to form a protective layer. The mix can also include grass seeds and fertilisers. This product could be used at the end of a working day and before weekends.