
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Fugitive Dust

Fugitive dust is particulate matter (particle pollution) that becomes airborne from activities such as construction, commercial mining, demolition and soil erosion from wind. Fugitive dust is an open, or nonpoint, source of air pollution since it does not originate from a specific source such as a stack, chimney or vent. Under certain conditions, fugitive dust can be a public nuisance and may be harmful to human health. It is, therefore, a regulated pollutant that must be minimized.



Health and Environmental Effects

The potential health effects of particle pollution are related to the makeup and size of the particles. The smallest particles pose the greatest health problems because they can be inhaled deeply into the lungs. People most at risk from breathing particle pollution are children, the elderly, and people with existing heart and respiratory disease. Healthy individuals can be affected as well, especially those who work and recreate outdoors. The health effects of inhaling particle pollution include:

- Irritation to the eyes, nose and throat.
- Respiratory distress, including coughing, difficulty in breathing and chest tightness.
- Increased severity of bronchitis, asthma and emphysema.
- Heart attacks and aggravated heart disease.
- Premature death in individuals with serious lung or heart disease.

Fugitive dust can also reduce visibility (i.e., cause hazy conditions) which can result in driving or work-site accidents.

How is Fugitive Dust Regulated in New Hampshire?

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Air Resources Division regulates fugitive dust. Fugitive dust is defined in New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rule Env-A 101.88 as “particulate matter that is uncontaminated by pollutants resulting from

industrial activity, including but not limited to emissions from haul roads, erosion of exposed surfaces and storage piles from wind, and other removal, storage, transportation, or redistribution activities.”

The New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rule Env-A 1002 establishes requirements for controlling fugitive dust. Env-A 1002 regulates fugitive dust from activities such as commercial mining, constructing or renovating buildings, road building or pavement maintenance, demolition of structures, and material storage activities. Anyone engaged in an activity that emits fugitive dust within the state is required to take precautions throughout the duration of the activity to prevent, abate and control dust emissions. Measures can include but are not limited to enclosing or covering, wetting and vacuuming.

In addition, NHDES has rules for specific activities that create fugitive dust. For example, Env-A 2705 requires hot mix asphalt plant operators to control fugitive dust from chutes and conveyors. Env-A 2805 requires sand and gravel operators to control dust from roadways and stockpiles at their facilities.

Best Management Practices Plan

To control and minimize fugitive dust, NHDES strongly suggests that any commercial or business activity subject to Env-A 1002, or that has the potential to generate dust, initiate best management practices for controlling dust, to include a written protocol.



At a minimum, best management practices should address the following elements:

- Wetting surfaces prior to and during demolition activities.
- Watering, treating, sweeping, sealing or paving roadways.
- Maintaining stockpiles to include watering, reducing drop distance between discharge point and top of stockpile, covering or enclosing.
- Constructing windbreaks, vegetative control, embankment construction or topographic controls.
- Enclosing crushers, screens or other material transfer points, wetting and dust collection equipment.
- Controlling the loading and movement of vehicles throughout the site, such as reducing speed, under unfavorable conditions.

More Information

For more information about fugitive dust in New Hampshire, contact the NHDES Air Resources Division at (603) 271-1370.