

Fact: Unpaved roads produce about 10 million tons of particulate matter air pollution each year in the United States.

Fugitive emissions complaints and violations are related to yearly precipitation patterns. During periods of prolonged drought, the number of complaints and violations generally increases. This is especially true during the summer months when the sun's heat dries up surfaces more quickly and people tend to be out doing activities that create more dust. On average, the Division for Air Quality receives about 250 complaints about fugitive emissions each year.

Ways to Control Fugitive Dust

- Windbreaks and barriers.
- Frequent water applications.
- Chemical applications (such as calcium or magnesium chloride, which may require a groundwater protection plan).
- Posted and enforced speed limits.
- Control of vehicle access.
- Covering of open piles.
- Use of gravel or water at site exit points to remove caked-on dirt.
- Washing of equipment at the end of the day or prior to site removal.
- Wet sweeping of public thoroughfares.
- Covering of open trucks.

You are prohibited from allowing fugitive dust to leave your property. If the majority of your time is spent cleaning up dust, you are not controlling the problem.

Links of Interest

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Fugitive Dust Control Measures and Best Practices

- <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-02/fugitive-dust-control-best-practices.pdf>

Department for Environmental Protection
Environmental Compliance Assistance

Program

EEC.KY.GOV/ECAP

ENVHELP@KY.GOV

(502)782-6189



The information in this document is offered only as general guidance. It is not a substitute for reading and understanding Kentucky's statutes and regulations governing the applicability and issuance of environmental permits. Specific requirements may vary with location. ECAP is not authorized to relieve any person from any requirement of federal regulations or Kentucky law through this document.

Fugitive Dust



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What is Fugitive Dust

Fugitive dust is defined as dust that is not emitted from definable point sources, such as industrial smokestacks. Sources include open fields, roadways and storage piles.

The state regulation that provides for the control of fugitive emissions may be accessed at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/kar/titles/401/063/010/>.

This regulation applies to any apparatus, operation or road that emits or may emit fugitive emissions provided that the fugitive emissions from such facility are not elsewhere subject to an opacity standard within the Division for Air Quality (DAQ) regulations.

The provisions of this regulation shall not apply to agricultural practices, such as tilling of land or application of fertilizers, which take place on a farm.

Dust from Around the World

Fugitive dust you create does not affect only those within close proximity to your location. A model of dust imports developed by NASA shows that “hundreds of millions of tons of dust are picked up from the deserts of Africa and blown across the Atlantic Ocean each year. [That dust] can also affect air quality in North and South America.” Read more here: <https://www.nasa.gov/missions/suomi-npp/nasa-observes-large-saharan-dust-plume-over-atlantic-ocean/>.

Why Control Fugitive Dust?

Besides causing the need for additional cleaning of homes and vehicles, fugitive dust can cause low visibility on unpaved roads, which can lead to accidents. In severe cases, it can interfere with plant growth by clogging pores and reducing light interception. Dust particles are abrasive to mechanical equipment and damaging to electronic equipment, such as computers.

Although generally not toxic, fugitive dust can cause health problems, alone or in combination with other air pollutants. Infants, the elderly and people with respiratory problems, such as asthma or bronchitis, are the most likely to be affected. In addition, not controlling fugitive dust at a worksite can create more hassle for the worksite foreman in response to complaints from neighbors, paperwork, fines and inspections from regional field office branches.

Sources of Fugitive Dust

Significant sources of fugitive dust include grain bins, quarries, haul roads and construction sites. In the example of an unpaved road, fugitive dust is created when a vehicle travels down the unpaved road. The larger and faster the vehicle, the more dust it will create. One way of controlling this is with dust suppression, such as water or gravel, at the end of unpaved roads.



Developing a Dust Prevention and Control Plan

- Identify all potential fugitive dust emission sources.
- Start with a facility site-plan map and record all paved and unpaved haul roads, stockpiles, material transfer points, parking lots, staging areas and any other areas subject to wind erosion.
- Study daily traffic volumes and determine whether roads and open areas are used frequently or occasionally.
- Determine frequency of application for each source and each control method.
- Record all dust control activities on a checklist, along with the daily weather information, such as wind speed and direction and temperature and rainfall. By doing this, you'll be able to monitor and evaluate the success of your efforts.
- Monitor your dust control efforts. You'll need to do this on a regular basis to ensure that the measures taken are adequately controlling fugitive dust.
- Use a self-inspection checklist. Doing this will help incorporate the routine tasks of fugitive dust control into your schedule. The checklist will also serve as a daily reminder and a record of your efforts to keep dust problems to a minimum.