

Fugitive Dust and Its Effects On Our Environment

There are many reasons, both environmental and health related, why fugitive dust should be controlled. DEQ investigates all complaints alleging fugitive dust. Not all instances of fugitive dust constitute a violation; however, when a violation is found, DEQ takes action.

What is fugitive dust?

By definition, fugitive dust means solid airborne particulate matter emitted from any source other than a stack or chimney. Allowing fugitive dust to cross property lines and interfere with the use of adjacent properties constitutes a violation.

How does fugitive dust affect public health?

Fugitive dust is made up of fine particles. When inhaled, fine particles can accumulate in the respiratory system, causing various respiratory problems including persistent coughs, wheezing, and physical discomfort.

Additionally, breathing these fine particles can increase susceptibility to respiratory infections and can aggravate existing respiratory diseases such as asthma and chronic bronchitis. Even short-term exposure to dust can increase the severity of respiratory problems.

How can you control fugitive dust?

When fugitive dust is a problem at your facility, you may use one or more of these control measures:

- Spraying water or chemicals to control dust during demolition of buildings or structures, construction operations, grading operations, or the clearing of land for commercial, industrial, or residential development,
- Applying water, chemicals, or some other covering on material stockpiles and other sources of air-borne dust,
- Using hoods, fans, dust collectors, or water sprays to suppress dust during material handling,
- Employing containment methods during sandblasting or other similar operations,
- Covering or wetting open-bodied trucks, trailers, or railroad cars when transporting dusty materials,
- Cleaning dusty material from paved street and parking surfaces,
- Planting and maintaining ground cover.

