

Best Practice Advice Note:

Dust Management

General Environmental Duty – a legal and ethical obligation to protect the environment by minimising harm.

Why follow Best Practice? Managing dust on construction sites in Victoria is essential to comply with legal obligations under legislation and to protect human health, the environment, and surrounding communities.

Why Dust Management Matters

- **Legal Duty:** Under EPA’s *General Environmental Duty (GED)* and WorkSafe OHS regulations, you must prevent harm to people and the environment.
- **Health Risk:** Dust inhalation can cause serious respiratory issues for workers and the public.
- **Environmental Harm:** Dust can pollute local waterways, vegetation, and habitats.
- **Community Complaints:** Visible dust can lead to stop-work orders, fines, or reputational damage.
- **Safety Hazard:** Dust reduces visibility, increasing onsite risks.

Key Principles

Plan and Stage Works:

- Minimise the area of exposed soil at any one time.
- Stage excavation or clearing progressively.

Control Dust at the Source:

- Use water carts, sprinklers or soil binders to suppress dust.
- Stabilise exposed surfaces early (e.g. hydroseed, geofabric, mulch).

Limit Dust Spread:

- Install wind fences or shade cloth barriers on the perimeter.
- Cover trucks and stockpiles; use wheel wash stations.

Protect Sensitive Areas:

- Identify nearby homes, waterways or public roads.
- Schedule dust-generating activities when wind is low.

Monitor and Adjust:

- Conduct daily visual inspections, especially during dry or windy weather.
- Adjust controls based on site and weather conditions.

Tips for Engineers and PMs

- Make sure dust controls are included in SWMS and EMPs.
- Assign staff to monitor and maintain controls daily.
- Update controls as conditions change (e.g. high winds, dry spells).
- Keep records (e.g. inspections, water cart use, complaints).

Dust Control Options

<u>Area / Activity</u>	<u>Recommended Controls</u>
Exposed earth	Watering, mulch, hydroseeding, soil binders
Haul roads	Water carting, sealing, speed limits (<20 km/h)
Stockpiles	Covering, surface wetting, stabilisation
Truck movements	Wheel wash, covers, restrict access during high wind
Site boundaries	Wind fencing, screening, bunding
Dry weather periods	Extra water carts, restrict earthworks, monitor forecasts