

Offensive dust

FACTSHEET

How does Environment Canterbury assess dust discharges?

If a consented activity is likely to cause dust, then it'll have conditions placed on it to ensure all practical measures are taken to lessen its effect. Environment Canterbury staff then monitor these consents to check that it is being adhered to.

If a member of the public see dust, then call Environment Canterbury's incident response line on 0800 765 588.

Given dust doesn't tend to stay in the air for too long, it can be difficult to substantiate that an offensive or objectionable dust event occurred, however staff investigating a dust event will assess the frequency, intensity, duration, offensiveness/character and location of the dust event. As well, staff will make contact with the consent holder and the witness/es to try and establish an effect.

FIDOL as per the Ministry of the Environment Guidelines

Key factors considered

FREQUENCY OF DUST EVENTS

Rare/ Occasional *Several times a day*

INTENSITY – HOW MUCH DUST? HOW SEVERE IS THE EFFECT?

Little dust/little effect *Large extent/severe effect*

DURATION – HOW LONG DOES THE DUST EVENT LAST?

Short (a few seconds) *Long-lasting (minutes at a time)*

OFFENSIVENESS – POTENTIAL FOR HEALTH EFFECTS, PROPERTY DAMAGE?

Lower risk of health effects *Higher risk of causing health effects (e.g. asbestos)*

Low potential or actual property damage *Severe losses or inconvenience*

LOCATION SENSITIVITY OF SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

Low sensitivity *High sensitivity – e.g. preschool*

When investigating a dust complaint, we may also consider the following:

1. Other validated dust events or incidents from the site or operation
2. The collection and analysis of dust samples
3. Weather conditions during the event – e.g. rainfall, or wind speed and direction
4. Effectiveness of dust control measures and other operational matters at the time of the incident
5. Dust event register held at the source site, including remedial or preventative actions required and recorded
6. Airborne and deposited dust monitoring information
7. Computer modelling of potential dust plumes
8. Dust diaries recorded by people living or working within the area
9. Public surveys/field investigations by Environment Canterbury or other parties

Effective dust control measures can prevent or remedy any offensive or objectionable effects from dust discharges. In most cases, actions 6 to 9 (above) will not be necessary. However, one or more of these actions may be needed for large scale discharges or where enforcement action is likely.

Who do I contact about an offensive dust event?

Call our Incident Response Line 0800 765 588.

We'll ask you for information about the location, duration, effects on property or nuisance effects, frequency of events and sensitivity of the area.

We will endeavour to respond to all customers who call within two working days. The staff member who investigates the incident will let both the customer and the alleged offender know the outcome of their investigation once concluded.

What action is taken?

When a dust issue is identified, we'll work with the offender to establish better dust management procedures, and if appropriate take enforcement action such as a fine.

References and further reading

- Canterbury Regional Air Plan Schedule 2
- Ministry for the Environment's (MfE) Good Practice Guide for Assessing and Managing the Environmental Effects of Dust Emissions (January, 2001)