



Focus on **Air Quality and Construction Projects**

From the Department of Ecology's Air Quality Program

The rapid growth occurring in central and eastern Washington means more development and construction will take place. Construction projects often stir up dust from unpaved roads, driveways, and bare yards. Dirt tracked or deposited onto paved roads from construction sites can cause airborne or windblown dust, which can be unhealthy for people living nearby. Breathing the small particles in dust can cause lung damage, and worsen conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema.

Are there laws about windblown dust?

Washington State does have laws for windblown dust. It is illegal to cause or allow windblown dust to cross property lines or to affect another person's health, property or business. It is also illegal to allow dust from your site to prevent another person from using and enjoying their property. Property owners and operators of a construction site or other windblown dust source must take reasonable precautions to prevent dust from becoming airborne. They must also make efforts to prevent dust from being tracked onto paved public roads. Construction site operators must make efforts to lessen dust emissions during operations.

Violating Washington State air quality regulations could lead to a penalty of up to \$10,000 per day, per violation.

How can dust be controlled?

Some suggestions for controlling dust include:

- Keep disturbed surface areas to a minimum by developing the site in stages.
- Water the site enough to keep the dust down, but not so much that water or soil runs off the site or unplanted yard.
- Use wind fencing.
- Plant a ground cover as soon as possible.
- Apply approved chemicals to stabilize the dust, if appropriate.
- Restrict traffic and reduce speed on site.
- Cover piles of dirt or materials to keep them from blowing away.

A complete list and description of dust control measures is available from Ecology (see the contact numbers on the next page).

Is dust the only air pollution that comes from construction?

No. **Smoke** is also an air pollutant that comes from new construction or property development. Smoke has many of the same health effects as dust.

Some things to remember are:

It is illegal to burn construction debris.

- Dispose of building and construction debris by chipping or grinding it instead of burning it. For information about this in your local area, contact your county planning department or your local air quality agency.
- Recycle leftover construction materials where possible.

Install only EPA-certified wood stoves.

- Certified stoves are tested and labeled according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards. It is illegal to install an uncertified stove. Contact retailers nearest you for information on certified wood heating devices.
- New masonry and factory-built fireplaces must meet design standards found in state building codes.

How can I get more information?

If you need more information or assistance in complying with these regulations, contact:

Ecology Central Regional Office, Yakima (509) 575-2490

Ecology Eastern Regional Office, Spokane (509) 329-3400

OR

Your local air quality agency listed below:

Spokane County Air Pollution Control Authority (509) 477-4727

Benton County Clean Air Authority (509) 943-3396

Yakima Regional Clean Air Authority (509) 834-2050

If you need this information in an alternate format, please contact Tami Dahlgren at (360) 407-6800. If you are a person with a speech or hearing impairment, call 711, or 1-800-833-6388 for TTY.