

Visual guide: Dust from urban construction sites

Dust from urban construction sites

A complaint of dust blown from a construction site is received from a resident across the road in a suburban area undergoing significant rebuilding of the housing stock.

What should be checked during a consequent site inspection by a local council officer?

Dust screening

The first photograph shows a poorly maintained dust screen on a suburban residential construction site, and a small exposed stockpile of building sand.



It will be obvious on inspection of such a site that the management of sediment is also not satisfactory. The pile of building sand is less than a metre from the kerb and gutter (at this location the stormwater drain is only 20 metres away and leads directly into the harbour).

Large soil stockpiles on a suburban construction site

The second photograph shows large exposed mounds of excavated soil stockpiled on a suburban construction site. Some of these mounds have clearly been there for some time, as there is evidence of vegetation on the largest pile in the background.

However, as some of the older pile is being removed and additional material added to the smaller stockpile in the foreground, there does not appear to be any effort to contain the soil and the construction site itself has no dust barrier in place around its boundaries.

The large and older stockpile of excavated soil has a vegetation cover that will help to minimise dust blowing from it.



The more recently excavated or relocated soil stockpile has no means of preventing dust blowing from it.

There is no dust barrier attached to the fence or gates to minimise the dispersion of windblown dust from the soil stockpiles.

Effective dust management on a large construction site

The following photographs show careful attention to managing the dust on another large suburban construction site.

During dry weather there is a water truck dedicated to continuous spaying across all areas of exposed dust on the site.



In sections of the site not accessible to the water truck continuous hand watering keeps dust levels down during earthworks.





Small temporary stockpiles of dirt can easily be isolated and covered to minimise windblown dust.

Dust from a large construction site like this one can be transported off site on the wheels of any vehicles moving out of the site. Dirt and mud deposited on surrounding roads will be pulverized into fine dust by traffic and then present a real nuisance to neighbours.



Here a clearly visible notice serves as a reminder, and good facilities have been provided so that it's easy for drivers to wash vehicle wheels before leaving the site.

An effective dust screen surrounding a site before work commences



Ineffective dust management on a dormant construction site

