



# INFO

## Controlling Dust in Spokane County

**What your business needs to know about controlling particulate matter (dust):** There are many types of operations and activities that can create excessive dust emissions. These include construction, site preparation, land clearing, excavating, demolition, grading, hauling, concrete cutting, roadwork, railroad ballast leveling, landscaping, masonry work, grain processing, grinding, rock crushing, baseball fields, off-road recreation, equestrian training, parking lots, etc. If you work in any of these or related fields, you need to be aware of the regulations for controlling dust.

### Why the concern over dust?

Dust, a major component of particulate pollution, is an air quality concern in Spokane, especially in the summer. If not controlled, dust can be a health hazard and a public nuisance. When inhaled, fine particles travel deep into the lungs, increasing breathing problems, damaging lung tissue and aggravating existing health problems. This is why Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency (SRCAA) requires the use of control techniques to prevent and minimize the release of dust emissions.

### Where does all the dust come from?

In the Spokane area, most dust emissions come from paved and unpaved road surfaces as well as the operations and activities listed above. In addition, the use of leaf blowers to clean dirt and debris from sidewalks, driveways, parking lots and other surfaces adds to the problem.

### What are the rules for controlling dust?

SRCAA Regulation I, Article VI, Section 6.05 specifies that:

- particulate matter emissions must be minimized using every reasonable precaution
- depositing particulate matter onto the property of others is prohibited
- precautions must be taken to remove dirt and mud from equipment and vehicles before movement onto paved roads

- dirt and mud tracked onto paved roads must be promptly removed
- dust emissions must not create a nuisance

### How can I control dust?

Depending on the situation, one or more of the following strategies is recommended to minimize dust emissions:

- use water or chemical dust suppressants
- minimize activities during periods of high winds
- use covered chutes, covered containers, or collection and control equipment when handling, transferring, and/or storing dusty material minimize free fall distances for dusty materials
- vegetate or mulch dusty areas
- maintain adequate freeboard and cover loads when transporting dusty materials
- keep paved surfaces clean
- restrict access or limit vehicle speeds on unpaved areas to 15 miles per hour
- limit the amount graded at any one time

Tracking dirt onto paved roadways can also generate dust emissions. The following strategies are recommended to minimize tracking:

- pave or gravel unpaved traveled surfaces
- pave or install gravel buffer areas at exits
- clean vehicle tires and undercarriages before traveling on paved roads (wash stations)
- promptly clean up material that has been tracked onto paved roadways (wet flush/spray off, street sweep/vacuum)

## Compliance and Enforcement

Spokane Clean Air inspectors respond to many citizen complaints about excessive dust emissions. Inspectors also conduct surveillance throughout the county, and will perform on-the-spot inspections if dust problems are observed. Documented violations may result in formal enforcement action, including civil penalties.

It is your responsibility to be aware of all dust control regulations before you begin activities that could generate dust. The entire regulation (Regulation 1, Article VI, Section 6.05) is available online at [SpokaneCleanAir.org](http://SpokaneCleanAir.org).

Not knowing about or understanding dust control requirements is not a defense. The best way to avoid costly violations is to implement adequate control measures and regularly monitor your operations:

- make sure employees and contractors understand the requirements for dust control
- evaluate the dust control procedures to identify additional issues that develop as the project progresses

**For additional information on dust control or for a copy of the Controlling Dust in Spokane County Guidebook, contact Spokane Clean Air, (509) 477-4727 or find online at [SpokaneCleanAir.org](http://SpokaneCleanAir.org).**