



AIR CENTRAL TEXAS

CONTROL CONSTRUCTION DUST

Protect workers and communities

You and your crews can help save lives and protect public health in the Austin area. During some construction activities, fine dust particles are emitted into the air, posing a health and safety hazard to your workers and others in the surrounding area. Breathing in these fine particles can increase the risk of lung problems, especially asthma. People who are more sensitive to air pollution are children and teenagers, older adults, adults with respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, and outdoor workers. By keeping air quality safe in our community, we all benefit.

Use this guide to know what's required of you during construction, when to reschedule certain dust-generating activities, and how to reduce dust at your project site. Taking these actions can improve public health and overall air quality in the Austin area.

Questions?

City Codes & Ordinances Questions:
Contact the [Development Process Team](#).

Air Quality-related Questions:
Contact [Phoebe Romero](#).

What's Required During Construction?

The following procedures help control construction dust and are required as part of a local code or ordinance. If the City receives a dust complaint, Environmental Inspectors will investigate and, based on findings, can issue citations or stop-work orders for non-compliance.

- ☒ **Proper cleaning and preparation of surfaces**
[Municode 722S.3](#)
- ☒ **Sprinkling for dust control**
[Municode 220S](#)
- ☒ **Preventing environmental contamination via dust control**
[Municode 1.14.5.4](#)
- ☒ **Following the City of Austin Erosion and Sedimentation Control Policy**
[Municode 1.4.2](#)
- ☒ **Submitting a Pollutant Attenuation Plan Report**
[Municode 1.3.4.3](#)
- ☒ **Installing Mulch Socks when applicable**
[Environmental Standard No. 648S-1](#)
- ☒ **Installing Triangular Sediment Filter Dikes when applicable**
[Environmental Standard No. 628S](#)
- ☒ **Following all structural welding and wind management codes**
[Municode 723.5](#)

Limiting Dust-generating Activities During Certain Conditions

Most of the time, construction activities can occur as planned. However, there are two factors that may affect or reschedule certain dust-generating activities on a construction site:

- high winds
- poor air quality

If possible, reschedule activities such as clearing, earthmoving, excavation, or other similar activities when winds are over 25 miles per hour or when the Air Quality forecast is orange or "unhealthy for sensitive groups."

Checking the Air Quality Forecast

In the Austin metro area, "orange" air quality days occur about 5-10 times per year. These days are most noticeable in the summer when dust from the Sahara Desert blows in. However, these days can happen at any time, so it's important to check the air quality forecast regularly. The forecast is released four days in advance.

Index Color	Air Quality Concern	Values of Index
Green	Good	0 to 50
Yellow	Moderate	51 to 100
Orange	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150
Red	Unhealthy	151 to 200
Purple	Very Unhealthy	201 to 300
Maroon	Hazardous	301 +



**CHECK THE AIR
QUALITY FORECAST**



**CHECK THE WIND
SPEED FORECAST**



**SIGN UP FOR DAILY AIR
QUALITY FORECAST EMAILS**

Best Practices for Your Construction Site



Minimizing Dust Generation

Dust is generated during construction activities like cutting, chipping, sawing, and grinding. During these processes, limit or capture as much dust as reasonably possible through sprinkling, dust suppressants, wet processes, or capture techniques such as vacuums, hoods, shrouds, or similar containment strategies.



Vehicles and Equipment

Limit vehicle speeds to less than 15 miles per hour on the construction site.

Prevent dust track-out from vehicles leaving the construction site by:

- Installing a gravel, steel grate, or plastic mat at all access points.
- Installing a wheel wash system or manually using a hose to wash excess dust off vehicle tires before leaving the site.

Reduce vehicle and equipment engine idling to limit emissions from combustion engines.

Cover and secure cargo loads when leaving the site.



Covers and Fencing

Cover or enclose storage piles to prevent dust and dirt from blowing away.

Use wind fencing, either artificial or vegetation, to create a windbreak around the site and storage piles.

Install silt fencing around the perimeter of the construction site to prevent dust wash-out. This is a requirement in any construction site's stormwater permit in Texas.



Water Application or Sprinkling

For each construction site, the effects of widespread water application will need to be evaluated to determine what effect the application will have on stormwater runoff and the surrounding environment. Water application can act as a dust suppressant for:

- Site Preparation and Earthmoving
- Storage Piles
- Material Handling and Transfer Systems
- Inactive Disturbed Areas
- Unpaved Roads
- Demolition and Deconstruction



Worker Safety

During dust-generating activities, ensure crews have access to personal protective equipment, including dust masks and protective eyewear.