



Description and Purpose

Wind erosion or dust control consists of applying water or other chemical dust suppressants as necessary to prevent or alleviate dust nuisance generated by construction activities. Covering small stockpiles or areas is an alternative to applying water or other dust palliatives.

California’s Mediterranean climate, with a short “wet” season and a typically long, hot “dry” season, allows the soils to thoroughly dry out. During the dry season, construction activities are at their peak, and disturbed and exposed areas are increasingly subject to wind erosion, sediment tracking, and dust generated by construction equipment. Site conditions and climate can make dust control more of an erosion problem than water-based erosion. Additionally, many local agencies, including Air Quality Management Districts, require dust control and/or dust control permits in order to comply with local nuisance laws, opacity laws (visibility impairment) and the requirements of the Clean Air Act. Wind erosion control is required to be implemented at all construction sites greater than 1 acre by the General Permit.

Suitable Applications

Most BMPs that provide protection against water-based erosion will also protect against wind-based erosion and dust control requirements required by other agencies will generally meet wind erosion control requirements for water quality protection. Wind erosion control BMPs are suitable during the following construction activities:

Categories

EC	Erosion Control	
SE	Sediment Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
TC	Tracking Control	
WE	Wind Erosion Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NS	Non-Stormwater Management Control	
WM	Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control	

Legend:

- Primary Category
- Secondary Category

Targeted Constituents

Sediment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nutrients	
Trash	
Metals	
Bacteria	
Oil and Grease	
Organics	

Potential Alternatives

EC-5 Soil Binders

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- Construction vehicle traffic on unpaved roads
- Drilling and blasting activities
- Soils and debris storage piles
- Batch drop from front-end loaders
- Areas with unstabilized soil
- Final grading/site stabilization

Limitations

- Watering prevents dust only for a short period (generally less than a few hours) and should be applied daily (or more often) to be effective.
- Over watering may cause erosion and track-out.
- Oil or oil-treated subgrade should not be used for dust control because the oil may migrate into drainageways and/or seep into the soil.
- Chemical dust suppression agents may have potential environmental impacts. Selected chemical dust control agents should be environmentally benign.
- Effectiveness of controls depends on soil, temperature, humidity, wind velocity and traffic.
- Chemical dust suppression agents should not be used within 100 feet of wetlands or water bodies.
- Chemically treated subgrades may make the soil water repellent, interfering with long-term infiltration and the vegetation/re-vegetation of the site. Some chemical dust suppressants may be subject to freezing and may contain solvents and should be handled properly.
- In compacted areas, watering and other liquid dust control measures may wash sediment or other constituents into the drainage system.
- If the soil surface has minimal natural moisture, the affected area may need to be pre-wetted so that chemical dust control agents can uniformly penetrate the soil surface.

Implementation

Dust Control Practices

Dust control BMPs generally stabilize exposed surfaces and minimize activities that suspend or track dust particles. The following table presents dust control practices that can be applied to varying site conditions that could potentially cause dust. For heavily traveled and disturbed areas, wet suppression (watering), chemical dust suppression, gravel asphalt surfacing, temporary gravel construction entrances, equipment wash-out areas, and haul truck covers can be employed as dust control applications. Permanent or temporary vegetation and mulching can be employed for areas of occasional or no construction traffic. Preventive measures include minimizing surface areas to be disturbed, limiting onsite vehicle traffic to 15 mph or less, and controlling the number and activity of vehicles on a site at any given time.

Chemical dust suppressants include: mulch and fiber based dust palliatives (e.g. paper mulch with gypsum binder), salts and brines (e.g. calcium chloride, magnesium chloride), non-petroleum based organics (e.g. vegetable oil, lignosulfonate), petroleum based organics (e.g. asphalt emulsion, dust oils, petroleum resins), synthetic polymers (e.g. polyvinyl acetate, vinyl, acrylic), clay additives (e.g. bentonite, montmorillonite) and electrochemical products (e.g. enzymes, ionic products).

Site Condition	Dust Control Practices							
	Permanent Vegetation	Mulching	Wet Suppression (Watering)	Chemical Dust Suppression	Gravel or Asphalt	Temporary Gravel Construction Entrances/Equipment Wash Down	Synthetic Covers	Minimize Extent of Disturbed Area
Disturbed Areas not Subject to Traffic	X	X	X	X	X			X
Disturbed Areas Subject to Traffic			X	X	X	X		X
Material Stockpiles		X	X	X			X	X
Demolition			X			X	X	
Clearing/Excavation			X	X				X
Truck Traffic on Unpaved Roads			X	X	X	X	X	
Tracking					X	X		

Additional preventive measures include:

- Schedule construction activities to minimize exposed area (see EC-1, Scheduling).
- Quickly treat exposed soils using water, mulching, chemical dust suppressants, or stone/gravel layering.
- Identify and stabilize key access points prior to commencement of construction.
- Minimize the impact of dust by anticipating the direction of prevailing winds.
- Restrict construction traffic to stabilized roadways within the project site, as practicable.
- Water should be applied by means of pressure-type distributors or pipelines equipped with a spray system or hoses and nozzles that will ensure even distribution.
- All distribution equipment should be equipped with a positive means of shutoff.
- Unless water is applied by means of pipelines, at least one mobile unit should be available at all times to apply water or dust palliative to the project.
- If reclaimed waste water is used, the sources and discharge must meet California Department of Health Services water reclamation criteria and the Regional Water Quality

Control Board (RWQCB) requirements. Non-potable water should not be conveyed in tanks or drain pipes that will be used to convey potable water and there should be no connection between potable and non-potable supplies. Non-potable tanks, pipes, and other conveyances should be marked, "NON-POTABLE WATER - DO NOT DRINK."

- Pave or chemically stabilize access points where unpaved traffic surfaces adjoin paved roads.
- Provide covers for haul trucks transporting materials that contribute to dust.
- Provide for rapid clean up of sediments deposited on paved roads. Furnish stabilized construction road entrances and wheel wash areas.
- Stabilize inactive areas of construction sites using temporary vegetation or chemical stabilization methods.

For chemical stabilization, there are many products available for chemically stabilizing gravel roadways and stockpiles. If chemical stabilization is used, the chemicals should not create any adverse effects on stormwater, plant life, or groundwater and should meet all applicable regulatory requirements.

Costs

Installation costs for water and chemical dust suppression vary based on the method used and the length of effectiveness. Annual costs may be high since some of these measures are effective for only a few hours to a few days.

Inspection and Maintenance

- Inspect and verify that activity-based BMPs are in place prior to the commencement of associated activities.
- BMPs must be inspected in accordance with General Permit requirements for the associated project type and risk level. It is recommended that at a minimum, BMPs be inspected weekly, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.
- Check areas protected to ensure coverage.
- Most water-based dust control measures require frequent application, often daily or even multiple times per day. Obtain vendor or independent information on longevity of chemical dust suppressants.

References

Best Management Practices and Erosion Control Manual for Construction Sites, Flood Control District of Maricopa County, Arizona, September 1992.

California Air Pollution Control Laws, California Air Resources Board, updated annually.

Construction Manual, Chapter 4, Section 10, "Dust Control"; Section 17, "Watering"; and Section 18, "Dust Palliative", California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), July 2001.

Prospects for Attaining the State Ambient Air Quality Standards for Suspended Particulate Matter (PM₁₀), Visibility Reducing Particles, Sulfates, Lead, and Hydrogen Sulfide, California Air Resources Board, April 1991.

Stormwater Quality Handbooks Construction Site Best Management Practices (BMPs) Manual, State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), March 2003.