

13.2.3 Heavy Construction Operations

13.2.3.1 General

Heavy construction is a source of dust emissions that may have substantial temporary impact on local air quality. Building and road construction are 2 examples of construction activities with high emissions potential. Emissions during the construction of a building or road can be associated with land clearing, drilling and blasting, ground excavation, cut and fill operations (i.e., earth moving), and construction of a particular facility itself. Dust emissions often vary substantially from day to day, depending on the level of activity, the specific operations, and the prevailing meteorological conditions. A large portion of the emissions results from equipment traffic over temporary roads at the construction site.

The temporary nature of construction differentiates it from other fugitive dust sources as to estimation and control of emissions. Construction consists of a series of different operations, each with its own duration and potential for dust generation. In other words, emissions from any single construction site can be expected (1) to have a definable beginning and an end and (2) to vary substantially over different phases of the construction process. This is in contrast to most other fugitive dust sources, where emissions are either relatively steady or follow a discernable annual cycle. Furthermore, there is often a need to estimate areawide construction emissions, without regard to the actual plans of any individual construction project. For these reasons, following are methods by which either areawide or site-specific emissions may be estimated.

13.2.3.2 Emissions And Correction Parameters

The quantity of dust emissions from construction operations is proportional to the area of land being worked and to the level of construction activity. By analogy to the parameter dependence observed for other similar fugitive dust sources,¹ one can expect emissions from heavy construction operations to be positively correlated with the silt content of the soil (that is, particles smaller than 75 micrometers [μm] in diameter), as well as with the speed and weight of the average vehicle, and to be negatively correlated with the soil moisture content.

13.2.3.3 Emission Factors

Only 1 set of field studies has been performed that attempts to relate the emissions from construction directly to an emission factor.¹⁻² Based on field measurements of total suspended particulate (TSP) concentrations surrounding apartment and shopping center construction projects, the approximate emission factors for construction activity operations are:

$$E = 2.69 \text{ megagrams (Mg)/hectare/month of activity}$$

$$E = 1.2 \text{ tons/acre/month of activity}$$

These values are most useful for developing estimates of overall emissions from construction scattered throughout a geographical area. The value is most applicable to construction operations with: (1) medium activity level, (2) moderate silt contents, and (3) semiarid climate. Test data were not sufficient to derive the specific dependence of dust emissions on correction parameters. Because the above emission factor is referenced to TSP, use of this factor to estimate particulate matter (PM) no greater than 10 μm in aerodynamic diameter (PM-10) emissions will result in conservatively high

estimates. Also, because derivation of the factor assumes that construction activity occurs 30 days per month, the above estimate is somewhat conservatively high for TSP as well.

Although the equation above represents a relatively straightforward means of preparing an areawide emission inventory, at least 2 features limit its usefulness for specific construction sites. First, the conservative nature of the emission factor may result in too high an estimate for PM-10 to be of much use for a specific site under consideration. Second, the equation provides neither information about which particular construction activities have the greatest emission potential nor guidance for developing an effective dust control plan.

For these reasons, it is strongly recommended that when emissions are to be estimated for a particular construction site, the construction process be broken down into component operations. (Note that many general contractors typically employ planning and scheduling tools, such as critical path method [CPM], that make use of different sequential operations to allocate resources.) This approach to emission estimation uses a unit or phase method to consider the more basic dust sources of vehicle travel and material handling. That is to say, the construction project is viewed as consisting of several operations, each involving traffic and material movements, and emission factors from other AP-42 sections are used to generate estimates. Table 13.2.3-1 displays the dust sources involved with construction, along with the recommended emission factors.³

In addition to the on-site activities shown in Table 13.2.3-1, substantial emissions are possible because of material tracked out from the site and deposited on adjacent paved streets. Because all traffic passing the site (i. e., not just that associated with the construction) can resuspend the deposited material, this "secondary" source of emissions may be far more important than all the dust sources actually within the construction site. Furthermore, this secondary source will be present during all construction operations. Persons developing construction site emission estimates must consider the potential for increased adjacent emissions from off-site paved roadways (see Section 13.2.1, "Paved Roads"). High wind events also can lead to emissions from cleared land and material stockpiles. Section 13.2.5, "Industrial Wind Erosion", presents an estimation methodology that can be used for such sources at construction sites.

13.2.3.4 Control Measures⁴

Because of the relatively short-term nature of construction activities, some control measures are more cost effective than others. Wet suppression and wind speed reduction are 2 common methods used to control open dust sources at construction sites, because a source of water and material for wind barriers tend to be readily available on a construction site. However, several other forms of dust control are available.

Table 13.2.3-2 displays each of the preferred control measures, by dust source.³⁻⁴ Because most of the controls listed in the table modify independent variables in the emission factor models, the effectiveness can be calculated by comparing controlled and uncontrolled emission estimates from Table 13.2.3-1. Additional guidance on controls is provided in the AP-42 sections from which the recommended emission factors were taken, as well as in other documents, such as Reference 4.

Table 13.2.3-1. RECOMMENDED EMISSION FACTORS FOR CONSTRUCTION OPERATIONS^a

Construction Phase	Dust-generating Activities	Recommended Emission Factor	Comments	Rating Adjustment ^b
I. Demolition and debris removal	1. Demolition of buildings or other (natural) obstacles such as trees, boulders, etc.			
	a. Mechanical dismemberment ("headache ball") of existing structures	NA		—
	b. Implosion of existing structures	NA		—
	c. Drilling and blasting of soil	Drilling factor in Table 11.9-4 Blasting factor NA		-1
	d. General land clearing	Dozer equation (overburden) in Tables 11.9-1 and 11.9-2	Blasting factor in Tables 11.9-1 and 11.9-2 not considered appropriate for general construction activities	NA -1/-2 ^c
2. Loading of debris into trucks	Material handling emission factor equation in Section 13.2.4		-0/-1 ^c	
3. Truck transport of debris	Unpaved road emission factor in Section 13.2.2, or paved road emission factor in Section 13.2.1		-0/-1 ^c	
4. Truck unloading of debris	Material handling emission factor equation in Section 13.2.4	May occur offsite	-0/-1 ^c	

Table 13.2.3-1 (cont.).

Construction Phase	Dust-generating Activities	Recommended Emission Factor	Comments	Rating Adjustment ^b
II. Site Preparation (earth moving)	1. Bulldozing	Dozer equation (overburden) in Tables 11.9-1 and 11.9-2		-1/-2 ^c
	2. Scrapers unloading topsoil	Scraper unloading factor in Table 11.9-4		-1
	3. Scrapers in travel	Scraper (travel mode) expression in Tables 11.9-1 and 11.9-2		-0/-1 ^c
	4. Scrapers removing topsoil	5.7 kg/vehicle kilometer traveled (VKT) (20.2 lb/vehicle mile traveled [VMT])		E ^d
	5. Loading of excavated material into trucks	Material handling emission factor equation in Section 13.2.4		-0/-1 ^c
	6. Truck dumping of fill material, road base, or other materials	Material handling emission factor equation in Section 13.2.4	May occur offsite	-0/-1 ^c
	7. Compacting	Dozer equation in Tables 11.9-1 and 11.9-2	Emission factor downgraded because of differences in operating equipment	-1/-2 ^c
	8. Motor grading	Grading equation in Tables 11.9-1 and 11.9-2		-1/-2 ^c

Table 13.2.3-1 (cont.).

Construction Phase	Dust-generating Activities	Recommended Emission Factor	Comments	Rating Adjustment ^b
III. General Construction	1. Vehicular traffic	Unpaved road emission factor in Section 13.2.2, or paved road emission factor in Section 13.2.1		-0/-1 ^c -0/-1 ^c
	2. Portable plants			
	a. Crushing	Factors for similar material/operations in Section 11.19.2		-1/-2 ^c
	b. Screening	Factors for similar material/operations in Section 11.19.2		-1/-2 ^c
	c. Material transfers	Material handling emission factor equation in Section 13.2.4		-0/-1 ^c
3. Other operations	Factors for similar material/operations in the Mineral Products Industry, Chapter 11 of this document		—	

^a NA = not applicable.

^b Refers to how many additional letters the emission factor should be downrated (beyond the guidance given in the other sections of AP-42) for application to construction activities. For example, "-2" means that an A-rated factor should be considered of C quality in estimating construction emissions. All emission factors assumed to have site-specific input values; otherwise, additional downgrading of one letter should be employed. Note that no rating can be lower than E.

^c First value for cases with independent variables within range given in AP-42 section; second value for cases with at least 1 variable outside the range.

^d Rating for emission factor given. Reference 5.

^e In the event that individual operations cannot be identified, one may very conservatively overestimate PM-10 emissions by using Equation 1.

Table 13.2.3-2. CONTROL OPTIONS FOR GENERAL CONSTRUCTION
OPEN SOURCES OF PM-10

Emission Source	Recommended Control Method(s)
Debris handling	Wind speed reduction Wet suppression ^a
Truck transport ^b	Wet suppression Paving Chemical stabilization ^c
Bulldozers	Wet suppression ^d
Pan scrapers	Wet suppression of travel routes
Cut/fill material handling	Wind speed reduction Wet suppression
Cut/fill haulage	Wet suppression Paving Chemical stabilization
General construction	Wind speed reduction Wet suppression Early paving of permanent roads

^a Dust control plans should contain precautions against watering programs that confound trackout problems.

^b Loads could be covered to avoid loss of material in transport, especially if material is transported offsite.

^c Chemical stabilization usually cost-effective for relatively long-term or semipermanent unpaved roads.

^d Excavated materials may already be moist and not require additional wetting. Furthermore, most soils are associated with an "optimum moisture" for compaction.

References For Section 13.2.3

1. C. Cowherd, Jr., *et al.*, *Development Of Emissions Factors For Fugitive Dust Sources*, EPA-450/3-74-03, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Research Triangle Park, NC, June 1974.
2. G. A. Jutze, *et al.*, *Investigation Of Fugitive Dust Sources Emissions And Control*, EPA-450/3-74-036a, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Research Triangle Park, NC, June 1974.
3. *Background Documentation For AP-42 Section 11.2.4, Heavy Construction Operations*, EPA Contract No. 69-D0-0123, Midwest Research Institute, Kansas City, MO, April 1993.
4. C. Cowherd, *et al.*, *Control Of Open Fugitive Dust Sources*, EPA-450/3-88-008, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Research Triangle Park, NC, September 1988.

5. M. A. Grelinger, *et al.*, *Gap Filling PM-10 Emission Factors For Open Area Fugitive Dust Sources*, EPA-450/4-88-003, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Research Triangle Park, NC, March 1988.