

Guidance on Controlling pollution from construction and demolition sites



Coventry City Council

www.coventry.gov.uk

Introduction

Construction and demolition works generally generate noise and disturbance, and may be close to residential properties and businesses. The purpose of this document is to give guidance to contractors and developers on the reasonable measures that Coventry City Council expects them to take to minimise the environmental impact on the local community.

The Council can control pollution from construction and demolition sites and will respond to complaints from the public about this. Any action taken is usually dealt with informally with the company but if this is not successful the Council will use its powers under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

The legislation expects that the contractor uses the principle of 'best practical means', or 'BPM', when ensuring the control of pollution and environmental nuisance. Advice regarding examples of BPM are given below. Failure to comply with guidance given within this document may result in the service of formal Notices and additional legal action.

It is important to note that the main contractor is responsible for all the activities of all sub-contractors on site at all times.



General information and advice

Hours of work

Coventry City Council recommends that the following hours be adhered to for works on site. It is especially important that these hours are used for 'noisy works' on sites, such as use of heavy plant or machinery:

Monday to Friday - 7am to 7pm

Saturday - 8am to Lunchtime

Sundays and Bank Holidays -

No noisy works

Any works outside these hours will require prior approval from Coventry City Council Environmental Protection Team. Full details of the proposed works should be submitted to Environmental Protection in writing at least 28 days in advance of the proposed start date. Approval to work outside of the above hours will only usually be granted under exceptional circumstances.

Communication with businesses and residents

Complaints are commonly received by the Council from local residents when they have not been informed of works being carried out close to their property. It is therefore essential that the contractor liaises with local residents and businesses from the onset. An effective form of communication is carrying out a 'letter drop' to properties in the locality of the site. The letter should include the following information:

- Nature of works to be carried out
- The proposed hours of the works
- The expected duration of the works
- Contact details of a main contact on the site in case of complaints.

Regular updates to neighbouring residents on longer term sites are recommended so that they can appreciate the progress on site. Copies of advisory letters should be forwarded to Coventry City Council Environmental Protection Team as examples of BPM being used on site.



For major sites it may be useful to organise structured residents meetings to allow residents the opportunity to ask questions regarding the development. Local residents groups could be used to help.

Responsible site operations

The site workforce, including all sub-contractors, should be made fully aware of the need to minimise polluting activities on the site, including keeping noise to a minimum. This could be included as part of a site safety induction. Voices and radios should be kept to a minimum volume so that they do not disturb local residents, especially early in the morning.

It is important that the contractor ensures that all plant and equipment, including any on hire, is maintained in good working order, ensuring it is properly silenced and meets statutory emission standards. Any maintenance

or servicing work that is likely to disturb residents should be restricted to within the Council's recommended hours.

Monitoring

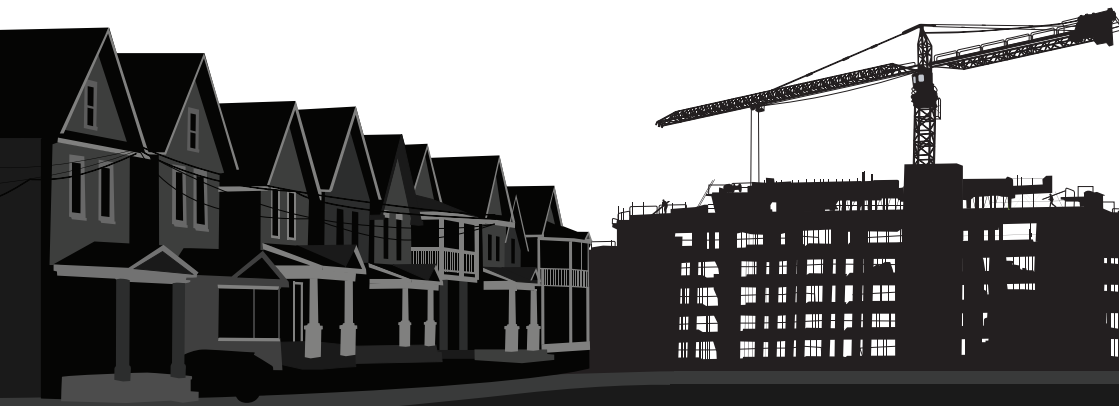
The main contractor should frequently monitor the site and adjacent areas to make sure that methods of pollution control are effective and not causing a problem to neighbouring properties. This can include subjective noise assessments to monitor if noise coming from the site is reasonable. For larger scale construction projects numerical noise predictions and subsequent measurement of noise may be appropriate. Coventry City Council Environmental Protection officers may also carry out monitoring on occasion, including in the event of complaints.



Noise and vibration

The City Council expects contractors to minimise noise nuisance to local residents and businesses. All operations should be carried out to conform with British Standard 5228 Parts 1, 2 and 4, Noise Control on Construction and Open Sites. On all sites at all times the Best Practicable Means to minimise noise and vibration should be used, and includes the following items (although this list is not exhaustive):

- Employ only modern, quiet and well maintained equipment on site;
- Noisier plant and equipment should be sited away from homes, offices and other sensitive receptors;
- The use of barriers, huts, acoustic barriers and insulation should be employed wherever practicable;
- Plant should be powered by mains electricity in preference over locally powered sources such as diesel generators. Where this is not possible suitable acoustic attenuation measures should be provided such as enclosures;
- Vehicles and mechanical plant should be fitted with effective exhaust silencers and maintained in good and efficient working order. Relevant EC Directives/UK regulations should be complied with;
- Avoid unnecessary noise, such as engines idling between operations, shouting, loud radios, or excessive revving of engines;



- All deliveries of materials, plant and machinery to site should take place within the Council's recommended hours stated above, and must be properly co-ordinated to prevent parking in local streets while awaiting access to site;
- Adequate planning should be made to ensure that lengthy operations, such as concrete pours, can be completed within the permitted hours;
- Care should be taken when loading and unloading vehicles, dismantling scaffolding or moving materials to reduce impact noise.

In the event of excessive noise being generated by a sites activities, the Local Authority has the ability to consider the service of a formal Notice under section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974. This Notice can restrict days and hours of work, plant and machinery used, and working methods as required. Notices would only be served if Best Practicable Means is not used at a site.



Air pollution

The City Council expects contractors to protect air quality and minimise dust nuisance arising from site activities from affecting local residents and businesses.

Under Part IV of the Environmental Act 1995 and the Governments UK Air Quality Strategy, local authorities are required to work towards achieving national air quality objectives. Construction and demolition sites working in Coventry are therefore expected to work towards meeting good standards of pollution and dust control. This includes trying to control fine particulate matter known as PM10. These particles are less than 10 microns in diameter and invisible to the naked eye, and research has shown that when these particles are inhaled deep into the lungs they have a significant effect on human health. These particles arise from several sources known to include diesel engine exhausts and dust from the construction industry.

Best Practicable Means to minimise dust should be used on all sites at all times, and this includes the following items (although this list is not exhaustive):

- Damping/Watering down during all demolition, sandblasting, clearance work, breaking up of existing ground surface and other site preparation activities;
- Stockpiles of materials shall be damped down and/or covered where necessary. Exposed stockpiles should be sited as far away from sensitive receptors as possible.
- Handling of the material should be kept to a minimum. Material handling methods should aim to minimise the generation of airborne dust;
- During demolition works, dust should be minimised by the use of debris screens or sheets, if practicable, completely around the building or structure being demolished;
- The use of wheel cleaning facilities and road sweeping equipment around site;
- The use of rubble chutes and skips, which should be watered if necessary;

- Skips and removal vehicles shall be properly covered when leaving site;
- Use of cutting, drilling and crushing plant with water sprays or dust extraction/collection where possible;
- Minimise vehicle movements and limit vehicle speeds – the slower the vehicle speeds the lower the dust generation
- Site traffic should be restricted to watered or treated haul roads
- Static and mobile construction plant engines and exhaust systems should be maintained so that exhaust emissions do not breach statutory emission limits set for the vehicle/equipment type and mode of operation. Plant should be regularly serviced and not left running unnecessarily.
- When transporting dusty materials and aggregates, enclosed or sheeted vehicles should be used
- Activities that generate large amounts of dust should be avoided during windy conditions.
- Any crushing and screening shall be carried out in strict accordance with a Local Authority Pollution Prevention and Control permit for the process.
- No vehicles or plant should be left idling unnecessarily
- Avoid use of diesel or petrol powered generators by using mains electricity or battery powered equipment where possible and where safety concerns can be overcome.



- General good management such as training staff on the causes and prevention of dust and initiating a preventative maintenance scheme to ensure efficient operation of plant.
- Control parking or queuing of vehicles outside the site where this may cause traffic congestion.

There shall be absolutely no burning of materials on the site for any purpose whatsoever.

Under the Clean Air Act and Environmental Protection Act, the Local Authority has the ability to take statutory action to prevent smoke and dust nuisance. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 allows a maximum fine of £20,000 for statutory nuisance offences with respect to industrial, trade or business premise. It is also an offence under the Clean Air Act to produce dark smoke from a site.



Other issues

Section 61 agreements

A contractor has the ability under Section 61 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 legislation to ask the Local Authority to agree to pre-set noise levels and working methods on a site. This would generally be done for a major, long-term site. It should be borne in mind, however, that the contractor must approach the Local Authority well in advance of the works commencing to organise the Section 61 agreement. The numbers of residential and other noise sensitive properties likely to be affected will need to be assessed, and it is likely that noise monitoring will be required for the duration of the works. Please contact the Environmental Protection Section at the Council to discuss this matter further if required.


Light pollution

Site lighting shall be positioned and directed so as not to intrude unnecessarily on adjacent buildings and land uses, including neighbouring residents and adjoining public highways.

British Standard 5228 Guidance

This document is the code of practice for information and procedures for controlling noise on construction and open sites, and is a useful form of guidance for contractors to use. Copies of this document may be obtained from HMSO.





Considerate constructors scheme

The Considerate Constructors Scheme is a national initiative, set up by the construction industry, to improve their image. Sites that register with the Scheme sign up and are monitored against a Code of Considerate Practice, designed to encourage best practice beyond statutory requirements.

The Scheme includes any area of construction activity that may have a direct or indirect impact on the image of the industry as a whole. The main areas of concern fall into three main categories: the environment, the workforce and the general public. Contractors may wish to join this scheme to help them minimise the impact of their activities on the surrounding community.



Useful contacts

Environmental Protection Section

Environmental Health Department
Coventry City Council
Room 311 Broadgate House
Coventry CV1 1NH

0500 834 333

www.coventry.gov.uk

Environment Agency

08708 506 506

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Considerate Constructors Scheme

www.considerateconstructorsscheme.org.uk

If you need this information in another format
or language please contact us.

Telephone: 0500 834 333

e-mail: env.protection@coventry.gov.uk