

DUST FROM MINERAL EXTRACTION: REGULATION OF EMISSIONS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Quarrying in the UK is principally for aggregates but also for coal and industrial minerals. Dust arises at all stages of quarrying and from old partly vegetated tips left by 18th to early 20th century metalliferous mining. Environmental permits set out operating conditions to protect air quality and surface water. Air quality legislation sets limit values for Pb, Cd, As, Ni, and Hg. If air quality objectives are unlikely to be met an action plan is prepared. Local authorities must identify contaminated land, establish what remediation is required, who is responsible for it and ensure that remediation takes place. Planning determines when, where and how development should take place. Local planning policy documents identify land allocations for extraction, criteria for determining planning applications, and measures for enforcing conditions. Policies are subjected to sustainability appraisal (including strategic environmental assessment). Planning applications should conform to local planning policies. If proposed development might cause significant environmental harm environmental impact assessment (EIA) is required to assess likely impacts and propose mitigation and monitoring measures as a basis for planning conditions. Health and Safety legislation and regulations protect the workforce at, and visitors to, sites setting out exposure limits. The local authority is responsible for investigating nuisances that cause unacceptable annoyance to the public. A notice can be issued requiring operations to stop. Minimisation of dust emissions depends on good design and management of sites. Principles of good site management include thinking ahead, reacting quickly to problems and training.

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