

Air Pollution Factsheet

Spray Drift Emission

Spray drift from activities such as spray painting and chemical spraying can cause a nuisance to neighbours and interfere with their normal daily activities. If severe enough, it can also damage property and impact on people's health.

Be a Good Neighbor

Take many cases talking to neighbours and nearby residents about the spraying activities planned and how long they will take may help to prevent or solve problems. Explaining to neighbours the type of work planned and the control measures being taken could help prevent complaints.

The Law

The *Environmental Protection Act 1994* introduced by the State Government includes controls for spray drift. Council is legally required to enforce these controls when spray drift problems occur from residential premises. If issues between neighbours cannot be resolved and further complaints are made, Council will have to investigate. If the spray drift is determined to be an environmental nuisance, Council may issue the residence causing the nuisance with an 'Direction Notice'. A Direction Notice will detail what offence has taken place and the time frame that the offender has, to rectify the problem. If the Direction Notice is not complied with, Council may then issue an on-the-spot fine. It is important to note that government departments other than Council may be responsible for regulating spray drift emissions from commercial sites and agricultural activities.

The Criteria

When investigating a spray drift complaint, Council will consider:

- the amount of spray, contaminant or pollutant being emitted
- the duration and rate of emission and the emission's characteristics and qualities
- the sensitivity of the environment into which the drift is being emitted and the impact that it has had or may have, and
- the views of any other neighbors or complainants.

Reducing smoke emissions

- Work indoors
Where possible, all spray painting should be done in an enclosed area such as a garage. Windows and doors should be kept shut to prevent any spray drift.
- Observe weather conditions
Consider the weather conditions before starting work. Try to schedule work when the weather is fine rather than in gusty or strong winds. Spray drift complaints are more frequent in summer as people are outdoors more often, and houses are left open for ventilation.

- Use accurate spraying equipment
The technology available is rapidly changing to produce equipment that is more accurate and produces less overspray. When spraying with chemicals or pesticides, only spray the recommended amount and spray it carefully. Always use paints, chemicals and equipment in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines. This will help reduce spray drift and also be more economical. If you only require a small area of coverage, it may be more practical, efficient and economical to brush on the product rather than spray. Some weed killing products recommend applying the product with a brush rather than spraying.
- Physical barriers
If spraying must be done outdoors, consider erecting physical barriers such as sheets or hessian. It is important to consider the location, height and width of the barrier prior to construction. Most importantly, check the wind direction.
- Consider alternative locations
Some activities cannot be carried out in a residential area without creating nuisance to neighbours. Consideration may need to be given to relocating the activity to a facility that houses a spray booth or to a commercial location.

For further information please contact:

Environmental Health Services at Mount Isa City Council on 4747 3200