

# BEST PRACTICES TO CONTROL DUST ON FARMLAND



## What You Can Do:

*In the Field: modify farming practices to minimize dust*

- Don't plow if the soil is dry and there are high winds.
- Whenever you plow, be sure to plant shortly after.
- Do not disk when average wind speeds exceed 15 mph.
- Do not till on fallow and bare ground when average wind speeds exceed 25 mph.
- Cover piles of fertilizer, compost, or soil.
- Minimize soil-disturbing field operations such as plowing, mowing, and tilling.
- Modify the timing and type of operations based on soil and weather conditions.
- Use surface coverings like wood chips, mulch, or plastic sheeting to help stabilize soil.
- Use cover crops like grasses and legumes to help reduce wind erosion.
- Use physical barriers such as fences, straw bales, and large trees to minimize the flow of dust.
- Pay attention to the dust you are causing: use water or dust suppressants when substantial dust is blowing offsite.

*On Dirt Roads: limit dust generation*

- Decrease speed and number of trips when driving on dirt roads.
- Drive slower than 15 mph on dirt roads within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of public highways, schools, or residences.
- Plant vegetation near an unpaved road to serve as a dust barrier.
- Apply gravel or dust suppressant to dirt roads whenever necessary.



## Health Effects

Airborne dust particles can be inhaled, and lodge deep in the lungs. Short term respiratory problems can include pain, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing.

Long term problems can include decreased lung function, aggravated asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory illnesses.

Particle pollution can also impact the heart and cardiovascular system.

Although particulate matter can cause health problems for everyone, certain people are especially vulnerable to adverse health effects. Sensitive populations include children, seniors, exercising adults, and those who already have respiratory or heart conditions.



### Protect Yourself

During high wind events, levels of particles can be extremely high for short-term periods. Try to minimize time outdoors and physical activity.

After a wind event, minimize activities that will stir dust particles back up into the air.

If you have to be outdoors when particle levels are high, use respiratory protection.

Note that respirators are not recommended for people with any kind of breathing problem because they limit the flow of air. Consult with your doctor before choosing to use a respirator.

### Pay Attention to Forecasts!

If high winds are forecast, adjust your schedule to avoid time outdoors, and avoid activities that will stir up dust.



(805) 961-8800  
[www.OurAir.org](http://www.OurAir.org)

### Additional Dust Control Resources:

Visit these websites:

[www.ourair.org/dust-farms](http://www.ourair.org/dust-farms)

[www.arb.ca.gov/pm/fugitivedust\\_large.pdf](http://www.arb.ca.gov/pm/fugitivedust_large.pdf)

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1049502.pdf](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1049502.pdf)