



Air Quality and Noise Management

Though it is all around us, air is one of the components of the environment often overlooked because it typically cannot be seen. It faithfully serves all life on earth, plants, animals, and mankind, through unique intertwined processes in the environment. Air quality, like other aspects of the environment such as water and forests, is under threat from human action. Indoor and outdoor air quality are important for the quality of life on earth.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is mandated under the Environmental Protection Act, Chapter 20:05, Laws of Guyana, to stem the creation of pollution havens, preserve, protect and enhance the national air quality, and ensure that clean air is maintained while economic growth occurs. Further, the Air Quality Regulations and Noise Management Regulations, both established in 2000, are jointly enforced to manage air emissions in Guyana.

The Air Quality and Noise Management (AQNM) Programme of the EPA is tasked mainly with the enforcement of these regulations which guide the establishment of parameter limits, the issuance of environmental authorization, monitoring and compliance assessment, and research for the management of air contaminants.

Who needs to be Authorised?

Any activity which emits any air contaminants in the construction, installation, operation, modification or extension of any facility relating to industry, commerce, agriculture, or any institution must be Authorised by the EPA. Some of these contaminants include smoke, solid particles (e.g. sawdust, cement), sulphuric acid mist, fluoride and hydrogen compounds, chlorine and carbon monoxide. Another important potential air contaminant is radioactive particles. These are typically utilized in medicine and industry and must be managed safely. It is an offence under the Air Quality Regulations to start any such activity without the approval of the EPA. **Penalties include fines of up to five hundred thousand dollars and imprisonment for six months.**

Know your Noise limits!

Categories	Day-time Limits(dB)	Night-time Limits(dB)
Residential	75	60
Institutional	75	60
Educational	75	60
Industrial	100	80
Commercial	80	65
Construction	90	75
Transportation	100	80
Recreational	100	70

Likewise, activities producing noise from construction, installation, operation, modification

Daytime -06:00h - 18:00h
Nighttime -18:00 h - 06:00h

or extension of any facility, must be authorized. Anyone who wishes to operate a loudspeaker or any other sound-making device or equipment at a public space (e.g. barbecues, shows, nightclubs) or at any private premises must seek permission from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Depending on the nature of the activity, the EPA grants two types of noise permits - Short Term Noise Permit and Long Term Noise Permit. The AQNM Programme processed 97.8% of applications received for Environmental Authorisation in 2017.

Complaints Management

The EPA frequently responds to complaints regarding air pollution. Most of these complaints are concentrated on the coast and are relating to odour nuisances from livestock rearing, fumes from spray painting activities, dust and noise from sawmills and construction, noise from restaurants, bars, and mechanic workshops. More than seventy (70) complaints related to air pollution were investigated in 2017. Noise producing activities must comply with the noise limits specified in the Noise Management Regulations.

New Initiatives – Radiation Safety

Under the AQNM Programme, the EPA is engaged in improving the safety and security of sealed radioactive sources through registration and authorisation. Moisture density gauges used in the construction sector are an example of sealed sources found in Guyana. It is important that sealed sources be regulated to ensure that they are managed in safe, secure environments by personnel who have received specialized training. Serious injuries and death can occur when radioactive sources are not managed properly.

In its journey to improve the management of sealed sources, the EPA is receiving much support from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, the EPA is implementing two projects funded by the IAEA. The projects seek to “establish and/or improve a sustainable, safe, adequate and permanent cradle to grave control of radioactive sources, consistent with the IAEA Safety Standards” and “establish and sustain the national safety infrastructure for the control of radiation sources”. To date, under these projects the EPA has benefited from three training workshops and is aggressively pursuing

You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: “Our Earth, Our Environment”, C/O ECEA Programme, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: eit.epaguyana@gmail.com or follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

Attach: IMG 6589: “Officers measuring particulate matter during an inspection”