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# Environmental Protection

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## Construction Sites Code of Practice

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Minute 128

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document is intended to give guidance to contractors on the measures that East Devon District Council expects them to take to minimise the environmental impacts of their work on the local community. The term 'contractor' applies to all contractors and sub contractors.
- 1.2 The Council has specific powers under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to deal with noise and environmental nuisance. The expectation under the legislation is that "best practicable means" (BPM) will be used to prevent nuisance occurring.
- 1.3 The Council requires all contractors to apply BPM to their work programme and techniques, irrespective of the size of the demolition/construction work being undertaken.
- 1.4 Adherence to this code will demonstrate a commitment to BPM and will subsequently minimise the environmental disturbance to local residents, reducing the need for enforcement action.
- 1.5 The contractor is encouraged, in showing his commitment to BPM, to complete and return the form found in Appendix 1. This is of particular importance for large-scale developments, and will assist the efficient resolution of enquiries and problems.

## 2.0 General Principles

### 2.1 Hours of work

- 2.1.1 Where residential occupiers are likely to be affected by noise, the hours of work will normally be restricted to the following:-

**Monday – Friday**

**8am – 6pm**

**Saturday**

**8am – 1pm**

**Sunday and Bank Holidays**

**No work where noise is audible at the site boundary**

- 2.1.2 All vehicles and plant arriving at and leaving the site shall comply with the same restrictions on hours. The main contractor shall be held responsible for ensuring these instructions are given to all drivers, including those delivering all site materials.
- 2.1.3 These times may be varied according to local circumstances. Any works outside of these hours require prior approval from the Environmental Protection Team, Environmental Health. It should be noted that approval will only be granted under exceptional circumstances and the contractor will be encouraged to inform local residents in advance of the proposed activity.

### 2.2 Publicity

- 2.2.1 The Council considers that liaison with local residents who may be affected by construction works is essential. The local residents should be informed of the nature of the works, proposed hours of work and their expected duration.
- 2.2.2 Communication with local residents should include publicity, including the name and telephone number of a main contact. This contact person should be able to give further information to the caller and deal with any complaints or emergencies that may arise at any time.

## **2.3 General Operations**

2.3.1 Where noise, dust and air pollution are likely to affect local residents the contractor shall be held responsible for ensuring that:-

- ◆ All plant and equipment, including any on hire, is checked to ensure it is in good working order and conforms to the manufacturers' standards. Equipment is to be properly silenced and meet statutory emission standards. Defective items are not to be used.
- ◆ Effective methods of work are adopted to prevent dust from becoming airborne at source. As dust is harder to suppress once it has become airborne, careful consideration must be given at the design stage to the enclosure of fixed plant, the provision of roadways, the water supplies, and ensuring effective exhaust ventilation and filtering.
- ◆ Before works commence, the site workforce shall be fully briefed on the need to keep all noise generated to a minimum. Shouting and raised voices shall be discouraged other than in cases where warnings of danger must be given. Radios shall not be played at a volume that is likely to be audible to local residents.

## **2.4 Monitoring**

2.4.1 Where local residents are likely to be affected all working methods that minimise noise, dust and air pollution impacts are to be used at all times. Measures included in this code are not exhaustive and additional measures can be used which will reduce environmental impacts further.

2.4.2 The effectiveness of all measures shall be monitored frequently by the main contractor, reviewed at least weekly and may be subject to inspection by officers of EDDC.

## **3.0 Noise and Vibration**

### **3.1 Audible Reversing Alarms**

3.1.1 No high frequency audible reversing alarms are to be allowed on vehicles working on the site. The site shall be set out so that as far as practicable the need for visiting vehicles to reverse is minimised. White noise alarms or alternative arrangements for providing a safe system of work must be used. The best method for safe reversing is to arrange the working and delivery areas so that reversing is kept to a minimum. The use of a banksman is recommended, as are reversing cameras. Audible reversing alarms are intended to warn people in close proximity to the vehicle who might be at risk of injury – they are not intended to inform people off-site, sometimes up to 1 mile away, that a vehicle is reversing. There are a range of audible alarms available at reasonable cost that will meet this requirement.

### **3.2 Plant and Equipment**

3.2.1 Noisy plant or equipment shall be sited as far away as is practicable from sensitive buildings. The use of barriers, such as soil mounds, site huts, acoustic sheds or partitions to deflect noise away from noise sensitive areas, is to be employed wherever practicable.

3.2.2 Wherever practicable all plant and equipment shall be powered by mains electricity in preference to locally powered sources such as diesel generators. Hand tools should also be electrically powered rather than petrol or diesel driven.

- 3.2.3 Vehicles and mechanical plant used for the purpose of the works shall be fitted with effective exhaust silencers, maintained in good and efficient working order and operated to minimise noise emissions. The contractor shall ensure that all plant complies with the relevant statutory and manufacturers' requirements.
- 3.2.4 Machines in intermittent use should be shut down in the intervening periods between being used or throttled down to a minimum. Noise emitting equipment that is required to run continuously may have to be housed in suitable enclosures.
- 3.2.5 Compressors must be "sound reduced" models fitted with properly lined and sealed acoustic covers that must be kept closed whenever the machines are in use.
- 3.2.6 Equipment which breaks concrete, brickwork or masonry by bending or by bursting shall be used in preference to percussive tools as far as practicable.
- 3.2.7 Pneumatic percussive tools must be fitted with mufflers or silencers of the type recommended by the manufacturers.
- 3.2.8 Where practicable, rotary drills and bursters activated by hydraulic, chemical or electrical power shall be used for excavating hard or extrusive material.
- 3.2.9 Plant shall be maintained in good workmanlike condition so that extraneous noise from mechanical vibration, creaking and squeaking is kept to a minimum.
- 3.2.10 Care shall be taken when loading or unloading vehicles, dismantling scaffolding or moving materials etc to reduce impact noise.

### **3.3 Piling**

- 3.3.1 In assessing the impact of any piling operations, the contractor will comply with the recommendations set out in the relevant current British Standard BS5228 Part 4 "Code of practice for noise and vibration control applicable to piling operations".
- 3.3.2 Where practicable pile driving shall be by jacking. The use of conventional impact hammers should, wherever possible, be avoided. Any pile driving is to be carried out by plant equipped with a recognised noise reducing system. The piling system to be used shall be subject to prior approval with the Environmental Protection Team at EDDC.
- 3.3.3 In some circumstances the Council may limit the hours of piling further than those quoted in 2.1.1.

## **4.0 Dust and Air Pollution**

### **4.1 Dust**

- 4.1.1 Watering down of the area should be carried out where necessary to minimise dust transfer into the atmosphere or neighbouring premises, whilst taking into account the potential for increased mud on the road. As a rule of thumb dust suppression must be used if dust rises more than about 1m above the ground surface.
- 4.1.2 Stockpiles of material shall be damped down or otherwise suitably treated or sheeted to prevent the emission of dust from the site. Stockpiles should be planned and sited to minimise the potential for dust generation. The handling of material should be kept to a minimum and when deposited onto a stockpile it should be from the minimum possible height.

4.1.3 Dust pollution shall be minimised during demolition by:-

- ◆ The complete screening, if practicable, of the building or structure to be demolished with debris screens or sheets.
- ◆ Control of cutting or grinding of materials on the site.
- ◆ Mixing of large quantities of concrete or bentonite slurries in enclosed/shielded areas.

4.1.4 Skips and removal vehicles shall be properly covered when leaving the site. Materials should be handled in such a way so that they do not give rise to excessive dust. Watering of rubble chutes shall be undertaken where necessary to prevent dust emission.

4.1.5 The contractor shall ensure that the area around the site, including the public highway, is regularly and adequately swept to prevent any accumulation of dust and mud. The use of wheel cleaning facilities and road sweeping equipment may be required.

4.1.6 Any plant used for the crushing of materials must be permitted by its home local authority under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Part 1 (Environmental Permits). All works shall be carried out in accordance with the conditions of such a permit. Where plant is used to recycle materials, the appropriate waste licence shall be obtained from the Environment Agency. The process operator should notify the Environmental Protection Team prior to the movement of the plant on to the site.

4.1.7 Sandblasting

- ◆ The work area shall be close-sheeted to reduce dust nuisance from grit. Routine checking is required to ensure that the sheeting remains sound or sealed during the operation. Particular attention shall also be given to the working platform to ensure that it is properly sheeted or sealed to contain dust.
- ◆ Non-siliceous grit shall be used to avoid long term irreversible lung damage from silica dust.
- ◆ Proper protection shall be provided for any structure painted with lead based paint.
- ◆ In cases where water is used for large scale cleaning and blasting the requirements of the Environment Agency should be followed.
- ◆ All grit must be prevented from falling into water courses.

## 4.2 Air Pollution

4.2.1 Burning of materials on the site will **NOT** be permitted.

4.2.2 The contractor shall take all necessary precautions to prevent the occurrence of smoke emissions or fumes from the site plant or stored fuel oils for safety reasons and to prevent such emissions or fumes drifting into residential areas. In particular, plant should be well maintained and measures taken to ensure that it is shut down in the intervening periods between work activities or throttled down to a minimum.

4.2.3 Emphasis should be placed on the following to minimise the risk of air pollution:-

- ◆ Use processes that do not generate hazardous fumes and/or hazardous dust.
- ◆ Ensure that airborne hazards do not escape from the site to affect members of the public and surrounding environment.

## **5.0 Asbestos**

- 5.1 Special precautions must be taken if materials containing asbestos are encountered. The contractor shall comply with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations, and any current regulations relating to handling and disposal. The contractor shall observe the exposure limits and measurement methods for asbestos that are set out in the relevant and current Health and Safety Executive Guidance Notes. The contractor shall consult with the Health and Safety Executive concerning precautions required when removing asbestos material.
- 5.2 Please note that all asbestos removal **MUST** be carried out by Registered Contractors.

## **6.0 Contaminated Land**

- 6.1 If during site works contamination is encountered on site, which has not previously been identified, no further development shall take place until a site investigation has been carried out. The investigation will survey and assess the extent of contamination. Recommendations for remediation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council's Contaminated Land Officer (EP Team) before further works can proceed.
- 6.2 The contractor shall consult with the Health and Safety Executive when working on land which is contaminated.
- 6.3 The contractor shall consult with the Environment Agency regarding proposed measures to prevent the contamination of water courses and aquifers.

## **7.0 Urban Ecology**

- 7.1 The contractor shall comply with the provisions of the current Wildlife and Countryside Act, and any conditions attached to planning permissions. The first priority is to maintain habitats intact and undisturbed and, if possible, to make improvements to enhance natural habitats. If appropriate, guidance should be sought from Natural England.
- 7.2 No mature trees shall be interfered with without written consent and prior consultation with the Council's Planning Department.
- 7.3 When Japanese Knotweed is encountered the contractor shall comply with the Environment Agency's current code of practice for its management, destruction and disposal.

## **8.0 Ancillary Site Activities**

- 8.1 Access to the site shall be located to ensure the minimum of disturbance from vehicles entering or leaving the site to persons in nearby noise sensitive buildings.
- 8.2 Lorries shall enter and exit the site in a forward direction except where space restrictions do not allow this. These conditions will be subject to prior discussions with the Highway Authority and the Police before implementation.
- 8.3 Wherever practicable all loading and unloading of vehicles will take place on site.
- 8.4 Lorries that cannot immediately enter or leave the site must switch off their engines.
- 8.5 The contractor will be responsible for all lorries delivering to or exiting from the work site and shall comply with the time restrictions in 2.1.1.
- 8.6 Mud on roads is regarded as one of the main environmental nuisance problems arising from construction sites. EDDC will expect the contractor to take strict measures to minimise the problem.
- 8.7 Rubbish shall be removed at frequent intervals and the site kept clean and tidy.

- 8.8 The contractor must advise all drivers, including site workers in their own vehicles, to be considerate to residents, not to park on grass verges and to report any damage to ditches, hedges or gateways. The contractor is responsible for the repair of any damage caused.
- 8.9 Fly-tipping is unlawful. Loads must only be deposited at authorised sites. Deposition shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Agency, the current Environmental Legislation and Special Waste Regulations.
- 8.10 To prove the correct depositing of excavated material and to prevent the occurrence of fly-tipping a ticket system will be operated at all sites. The contractor will provide a sequentially numbered ticket system for each work site to confirm that each lorry load of spoil is deposited at an approved site.
- 8.11 Hoardings shall be frequently inspected, repaired and repainted as necessary.
- 8.12 Site lighting shall be positioned and directed so as not to intrude unnecessarily on adjacent buildings and land uses. It must not cause distraction or confusion to passing drivers on adjoining public highways.
- 8.13 Toilet and washing facilities will be provided, be kept clean and properly maintained.

## Appendix 1

### List of Contacts

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#### East Devon District Council

**Tel: 01395 516551**

Building Control

Development Management (Planning)

Arboricultural Officer

*Environmental Health*

Tel: 01395 517456

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#### Health and Safety Executive

Tel: 01752 276300

#### Environment Agency

Tel: 0800 807060

(Emergency)

Tel: 08708 506506

(Enquiries)

#### Natural England

Tel: 0845 6003078

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