

FAQ: Air Permits and Particulate Matter

What is an air quality permit?

An air quality permit establishes the amount of pollution a facility can emit to the air and describes measures the facility is required to take to limit the pollution. Any facility expected to emit more than established thresholds must have a permit to begin construction and operate.

Only a few types of operations are required to obtain a permit specifically for fugitive dust; however, DEC is currently reviewing existing statutes regulating fugitive dust to determine if additional requirements are needed to maintain air quality standards.

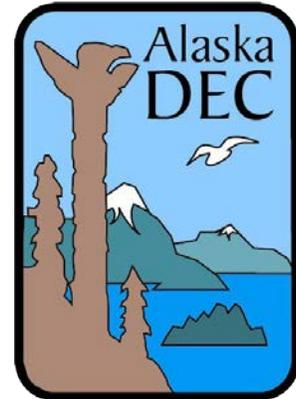
Who has to have a permit?

Facilities that emit over 100 tons per year of specific pollutants must obtain a major permit and sources emitting 15 to 99 tons per year of the same pollutants need a minor permit. If these sources will also emit particulate matter, it will be included in the permit. With the exception of six source types, the potential to emit fugitive dust does not trigger the need for a permit. The sources requiring a permit for fugitive dust based their operation type include

- Asphalt plants (at least 5 tons per hour)
- Thermal soil remediation units (at least 5 tons per hour)
- Rock crushers (at least 5 tons per hour)
- Incinerators (at least 1,000 tons per hour)
- Coal preparation plants
- Port of Anchorage stationary sources

Permitted versus unpermitted sources

Facilities that do not meet the thresholds for permits do not need to obtain permits to operate. However, unpermitted facilities must still not cause a violation of air quality. If unpermitted facilities are suspected of violating air quality standards, DEC works with source operators to implement the reasonable precautions needed to protect air quality.



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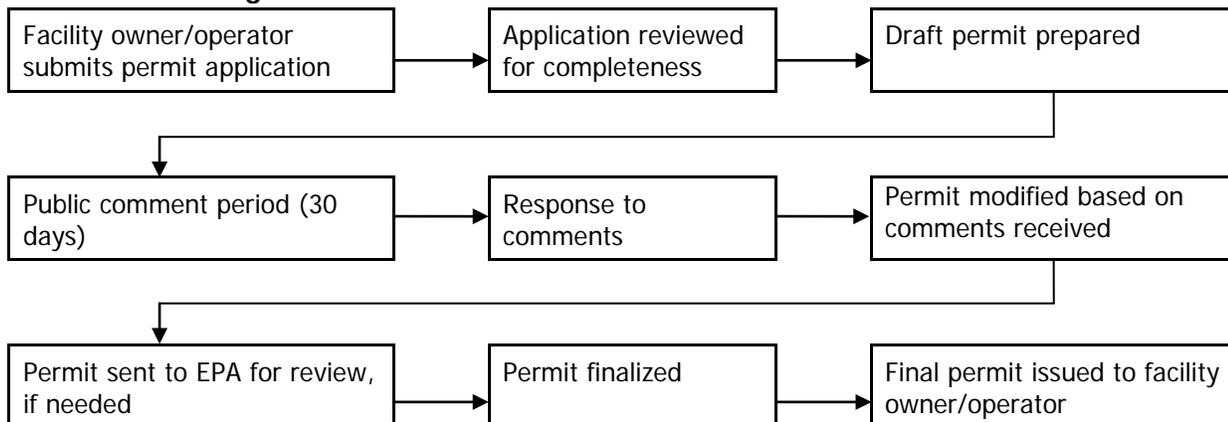
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How are permits issued?

Depending on the size of the source and complexity of its operations, permits can take from several months to several years to be issued. The general permitting process is outlined below. The length of time needed to issue the permit will vary depending on the complexity of the operation and permit type (major or minor).

General Permitting Process



What if someone violates their permit?

When permit violations occur, the permittee is required to notify DEC as stated in their permit and to rectify the situation. If a facility has repeated violations, DEC may impose fines and additional emission reduction measures through the legal process called a consent decree. Although it rarely occurs, DEC can repeal a permit if a facility is unable or unwilling to comply.

Can I get a copy of a permit?

Active permits are available on the DEC website at

<https://myalaska.state.ak.us/dec/air/airtoolsweb/PublicPermitListings.aspx>.