

Is An Air Quality Assessment Required?

This is a summary of the principal published criteria/thresholds to help you determine whether you will need to provide an air quality assessment in support of your planning application. It should be used as a guide only and consultation with the relevant planning/regulatory authority should always be undertaken at the earliest opportunity. Air Quality Assessments Ltd can offer assistance in the early stages of a planning application, providing professional advice during consultations. Further information on whether an air quality assessment may be required, including references, has been published by Air Quality Assessments Ltd, and is available at <http://aqassessments.co.uk/services/is-an-air-quality-assessment-required>.

Demolition/Construction

Dust and PM₁₀ emissions from demolition and construction may need to be assessed if there is:

- a human receptor within 350 m (50 m in London) of the site boundary, or 50 m of the route(s) used by construction vehicles on the public highway, up to 500 m from the site entrance(s); or
- an ecological receptor within 50 m of the boundary of the site, or 50 m of the route(s) used by construction vehicles on the public highway, up to 500 m from the site entrance(s)

Emissions from construction traffic may need to be assessed if:

- It is a large, long-term construction site that would generate large HGV flows (>200 movements per day) over a period of a year or more.

AQMAs

A development is likely to require an air quality assessment if it:

- Is within, or adjacent to an AQMA,
- Could result in the declaration of an AQMA;
- Would conflict with or render unworkable elements on an Air Quality Action Plan.

Odour

Odour impacts may need to be assessed if proposals are likely to release odours, or if a sensitive use is being proposed near an existing odour source. The following are examples of odour sources that may need to be considered:

- Wastewater treatment works;
- Waste processing/management;
- Commercial kitchens;
- Agriculture;
- Industrial processes; and
- Biogas production.

Dust

There are no specific criteria relating to dust emissions from sources other than demolition/construction; however, it may be reasonable to use the same criteria as those used for demolition/construction.

Combustion Plant

There are no established criteria for the size of plant that might require assessment. Biomass boilers, CHP, power generation and industrial processes are all likely to require an air quality assessment. Early consultation with the relevant regulatory authority is recommended.

Traffic

Emissions from traffic may need to be assessed if proposals:

- Change LDV traffic flows by >100 AADT within or adjacent to an AQMA, or >500 elsewhere;
- Change HDV traffic flows by > 25 AADT within or adjacent to an AQMA, or >100 elsewhere
- Change vehicle speeds by ± 10 kph on a road with an AADT of 10,000, or 5,000 if narrow and congested;
- Have an underground car park with extraction system;
- Realign roads or introduce a new junction; and
- Introduce new exposure close to existing road traffic sources.

Habitats

Emissions from new development may need to be assessed if there is a risk of significant impacts at sensitive habitats in internationally designated sites (SPA, SAC, Ramsar) and SSSIs. An assessment may be required if a development:

- Affects traffic on a road within 200 m of a conservation site;
- requires an Environmental Permit and is within 10 km of a SPA/SAC/Ramsar site, or within 2 km of a SSSI/NNR/LNR/Local wildlife site/ancient woodland.

London

An air quality assessment may be required for a major development where it:

- is located in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA);
- is likely to result in a new air pollution exceedance;
- is likely to exacerbate an existing air pollution exceedance;
- is located within 150 metres of a sensitive receptor (schools, hospitals, care homes, nurseries, residential development);
- will bring sensitive receptors into an area of poor air quality;
- includes biomass boilers and/or combined heat and power; or
- involves waste management / treatment activities, mineral extraction or any other general industrial combustion process.

Planning applications for major developments in London also need to be accompanied by an 'air quality neutral' assessment.

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