



Air Pollution

In last week's article, we discussed noise pollution and the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 2000. This week we turn our focus to air pollution and what laws exist to address this problem. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed Environmental Protection (Air Quality) Regulations (2000) to address air pollution. This Regulation is among four (4) 'pollution prevention' Regulations being implemented by the (EPA).

Clean air is important for people to live healthy lives. However, certain human activities taking place in the environment pollute the air. Smoke, dust, fumes and harmful gases pollute the air. Once these pollutants enter the atmosphere we are all affected.

EPA's role is to ensure that atmospheric pollutants released from human activities are within allowable levels, i.e. levels that will not adversely affect the health of plants, animals and humans.

Types of air pollutants and sources

There are many types of air pollutants e.g.:

Carbon monoxide – This gas is released from vehicles, burning wood, coal, gasoline, natural gases and kerosene.



Nitric acid – This substance is produced naturally by bacterial and volcanic action and lightning and the use of explosives or in welding processes.

Hydrogen sulphide – This gas comes from decaying matter such as dead animals or sewage; in high concentration it's poisonous.

Chlorine – A substance found in fertilizers or cleaning products.

Fluoride compounds – This chemical is emitted by industries that manufacture aluminum, glass, steel, ceramics and clay

Hydrogen chloride – This substance is produced from burning of fossil fuels or open-pit burning of plastics.

Sulphuric acid mist – This acid emanates from the burning of coal, oil and gases.

Solid Particles – these are fumes, dust and smoke

Impacts of air pollution

When polluted air is inhaled it can damage our lungs, cause respiratory problems as wheezing and shortness of breath; toxicity to the gastrointestinal tract, liver, skin or sense organs and can also affect our concentration, slow our reflexes and even make us confused and sleepy. In livestock it accumulates in their bones and causes deformities.

All air pollutants are dangerous to human health, animals or plants whether there is short term impact or long term. Therefore, we should protect ourselves, and the plants and animals around us that we depend on.

Environmental Authorization

According to the Environmental Protection (Air Quality) Regulations 2000, any facility that emits air pollutants must register with the Agency and apply for an Environmental Authorization. No one should be involved in activities that lead to emission of contaminants into the atmosphere without an Environmental Authorization to do so.

There are penalties for persons who refuse to comply with the Regulations up to a fine of \$500,000 or imprisonment for up to 6 months.

All air contaminants must be managed

A list of all air contaminants produced by facilities must be produced to the EPA and a programme will be developed and implemented for the management of the contaminants which were identified and registered.

Different areas are given different air pollution limits and if anyone is found exceeding the limit set by EPA they will be guilty of an offence and may either be fined or imprisoned. For offences where a penalty has not been established, defaulters will pay a fine up to \$80,000.

Persons need to be careful in the storing, handling and exporting of substances in order to prevent the emission of contaminants.

Remember, to make a complaint against any facility causing air pollution; you can call 225-6044/225-5471/225-5467 or email to epa@epaguyana.org or eit.epaguyana@gmail.com.

Sources:

<http://www.conserve-energy-future.com/causes-effects-solutions-of-air-pollution.php>

[*EPA, Environmental Protection Regulations 2000*](#)

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