



Air Quality Regulations for Abrasive Blasting Operations

(For facilities located outside of Bernalillo County)

New Mexico air quality regulations require abrasive blasting operations to fully control particulate emissions and at times to obtain an air quality permit. Air quality regulations are necessary to preserve the quality of the air that all New Mexicans breathe.

The New Mexico regulations include some exemptions for specific types of abrasive blasting operations that do not have to meet full permitting requirements. However, particulate matter emissions must be controlled in order to meet the requirements of the exemptions.

The following information should help you decide if you meet the exemptions, or if you need an air quality permit for your operation.

What are the exemptions?

The abrasive blasting exemptions are very specific:

- ✓ Blasting operations must be entirely enclosed in a building, and
- ✓ No visible particulate emissions can be released from the building

What types of structures meet the exemption requirements?

1. A permanent building with a roof and removable or tarped walls, or
2. A portable blast shelter with a roof, or
3. A tarp and scaffolding system with a tarp roof, or
4. A tarp or canvas tent enclosure

Building vents and filters

Buildings used for abrasive blasting require ventilation to maintain air flow. Ventilation systems must have filters that are maintained to prevent visible emissions from leaving the enclosure.

What about large objects?

In the case of very large and immobile objects, such as large tanks, etc., a tarp scaffolding system can be installed over the portion of the object that is to be blasted with abrasives. Once the portion is completed, the tarp may be moved to a new portion for completion. However, the system **must have a tarp roof** to prevent all emissions from leaving the blast area.

Do you have any tips on how to reduce visible emissions?

- ✓ Use dust suppressants and reduction treatments;
- ✓ Use abrasives that do not fracture readily or produce excessive dust;
- ✓ Abrasive blasting should not be performed during windy conditions;
- ✓ All abrasive blasting waste must be cleaned from sites to avoid problems with windblown material

I'm exempt, what do I need to do?

You must fill out an air quality Notice of Exemption form for your operation. These forms are available from the Air Quality Bureau and are also available on our website: www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/forms/Exemption-Notification-Form.doc

I'm not exempt, now what?

If you cannot meet these exemptions, you must apply for and obtain an air quality permit before you perform abrasive blasting.

What if I choose to ignore this?

If you choose to ignore the law and are in violation you can be fined, so make sure you are in compliance.

Do you still have questions?

If so, you can contact the New Mexico Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) for more information and guidance regarding your business. SBEAP is not an enforcement program; we are here to help you through the air quality process.

(505) 222-9507 or 222-9583

For Air Quality Permit Information in Bernalillo County, call the Albuquerque Air Quality Division at (505) 768-1972.

We thank you for your interest in keeping New Mexico beautiful!