

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**ATMOSPHERIC RESOURCE QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

(Ac.)

CODE 370

**DEFINITION**

A combination of treatments to manage resources that maintain or improve atmospheric quality.

**PURPOSE**

- ◆ Minimize or reduce emissions of:
  - Particulate matter
  - Smoke
  - Odors
  - Greenhouse gases
  - Ozone
  - Chemical drift
- ◆ Maintain or increase visibility

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice applies to cropland, forestland, rangeland, roads, feedlots, dairies, poultry and swine operations and other Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), equipment yards and staging areas, and other lands that contribute primary airborne particulates (dust, smoke, and chemicals), secondary airborne particulates (ammonia, nitrates, fertilizers, animal emissions, and animal waste emissions), organic products, odor, greenhouse gases [carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>)], objectionable odors, and other gases that have a negative impact on air quality.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes**

The landowner is responsible for acquiring and following all necessary local, state, and federal permits.

The work shall be performed in compliance with all international, federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations affecting the control of particulate matter, smoke, visibility/haze, ozone, odors, greenhouse gases, and chemical drift in the area of concern.

**Specific Criteria Applicable to Reducing Particulate Matter Emissions**

**Roads.** Minimize PM-10 (particulate matter less than 10 microns) generation from unpaved roads, staging areas, and equipment storage areas by treating with water, chemicals, soil stabilizers, mulch, or other cover.

The amount of mud tracked onto paved roads shall be reduced by cleaning equipment before leaving the field or cleaning tracked mud off of paved roads.

**Confined Animals.** Manure management plans shall identify non-critical air periods when confined areas can be cleaned without contributing to high PM-10 concentrations in the air.

Management plans to decrease PM-10 and PM-2.5 (less than 2.5 microns) production from activities in concentrated animal areas shall include, as appropriate, maintaining minimum manure depths, sprinkler watering, surfacing, and corral cleaning time tables.

Animal feed shall be mixed in an enclosed area or during low wind periods to minimize dust from animal feed processing.

Sprinkler watering to reduce PM-10 releases from feedlots shall be managed to minimize ammonia emissions from wet manure.

Feed and manure additives shall be utilized to minimize ammonia production and loss to the air. Refer to Oklahoma Conservation Practice Standard Feed Management (592) for guidance on feed management relating to air quality.

The amount, method, and timing of animal waste storage and disposal shall be managed in conjunction with other practices to minimize ammonia volatilization losses from the waste.

**Cropland.** Oklahoma Conservation Practice Standards Residue Management (329A, 329B or 329C) shall be used to reduce the generation of particulate matter from agricultural operations on cropland.

Cover crops shall be established on fields susceptible to PM-10 generation during vulnerable periods. Refer to Oklahoma Conservation Practice Standard Cover Crop (340) for guidance on establishing cover crops.

Cover crops shall be planted between the rows in orchards, groves and vineyards to minimize PM-10 generation during harvest operations.

Mowing operations shall be done in a manner which minimizes the generation of particulate matter.

#### **Specific Criteria Applicable to Reducing Smoke Emissions**

When burning, follow all procedures specified in agency burn policy including identification of off-site impacts.

In air sheds that impact Class I regional haze areas (pristine areas), burn or smoke management plans shall be followed.

#### **Specific Criteria Applicable to Reducing Odor Emissions**

Oklahoma NRCS Waste Utilization Standard (633) shall be used to reduce the amount of odor during manure spreading operations.

Windbreaks shall be sited to minimize the movement of odor away from an odor-producing source to a sensitive area. Tree varieties and placement for the windbreak shall be managed to maximize odor interception and dilution of air, and reduce odor leaving the source. Refer to the Oklahoma Conservation Practice Standard

Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380) for guidance on reducing odor emissions.

#### **Specific Criteria Applicable to Reducing Greenhouses Gas Emissions**

Plans to manage carbon sequestration increases in organic matter and soils as well as offset CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to the atmosphere shall specify the frequency and intensity of tillage activities.

Plans to provide renewable energy sources and offset greenhouse gas emissions through biomass removal shall specify the amount and timing of the biomass removal. Sufficient biomass shall be left on the surface to maintain soil quality and to achieve the planned soil loss reduction.

Reduction of methane emissions from animal waste storage shall be accomplished using an appropriate anaerobic digester or other approved methane reduction technology.

Nitrogen fertilizers shall be applied to croplands and rangelands in a manner which minimizes the loss of nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) to the air. Refer to Oklahoma Conservation Practice Standard Nutrient Management (590) for guidance on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### **Specific Criteria Applicable to Reducing Ozone**

Minimize the emissions of NO<sub>x</sub>(Nitrogen Oxides formed when any fuel is burned in air), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and other ozone precursors from farm equipment, irrigation engines, livestock, and agricultural burning.

#### **Specific Criteria Applicable to Reducing Chemical Drift**

Reduce volatile organic compounds from pesticide application by changing formulations and adapting methods of application.

Minimize chemical drift during pesticide applications.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

Secondary particulate matter is derived from emissions of ammonia, nitrates, fertilizers, animal emissions, and animal waste emissions, organic products, odor, greenhouse gases [carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and

methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), ozone, chemical drift and increasing or maintaining visibility.

**Particulate Matter.** Where appropriate, conservation plans which identify wind erosion controls should evaluate those controls for their PM-10 reductions.

Moving towards a less intensive tillage system will reduce particulate matter generation and enhance soil carbon sequestration. Refer to Oklahoma Conservation Practice Standards Residue Management (329A, 329B, and 329C) for guidance on reduced tillage systems.

Use tillage methods and/or equipment that have been proven to reduce particulate matter generation.

Instead of burning tree-trimming wastes, they can be chipped/shredded and used for composting or as mulch on unpaved roads or other areas that produce particulate emissions.

Irrigation water can be applied to soil surfaces to reduce particulate matter generation.

Mulch materials can be used on critically eroding areas to help reduce particulate matter generation.

Reduce or limit turning of equipment and vehicles on paved roads to reduce the amount of soil tracked onto roads.

Controlling speed and access on unpaved roads will reduce the generation of particulate matter.

Using cleaner burning fuels, such as natural gas, will reduce the emission of ozone precursors [nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and volatile organic compound (VOCs)] from farm engines.

**Smoke.** Use alternative disposal methods for other combustible materials such as bags, sacks and domestic waste that will be more environmentally beneficial.

**Odor.** Anaerobic digesters can be constructed for odor control and methane capture.

Consider feed management to reduce odor generation.

**Greenhouse Gases.** Reduce nitrogen losses as N<sub>2</sub>O through the use of fertilizer type, amount and application timing and method, as described in Oklahoma Conservation Practice Standard Nutrient Management (590).

## PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans for atmospheric resource quality management that are elements of a more comprehensive conservation plan shall recognize other requirements of the conservation plan and be compatible with them.

Plans and specifications for Atmospheric Resource Quality Management shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

Plans and specifications will be listed separately to address particulate matter, smoke, odor and, greenhouse gas management. Plan narratives or job sheets will address identified atmospheric resource concerns to meet quality and condition criteria.

The location of all supporting practices used will be shown on the drawings or conservation plan map.

## OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The conservation plan shall include operation and maintenance items needed to continue treatment of atmospheric resource related concerns.

Records shall be kept in accordance with associated practices and Federal, state and local laws.