Complaint Response Frequently Asked Questions

What kinds of complaints does Mecklenburg County Air Quality (MCAQ) investigate?

- MCAQ responds to citizen requests for service regarding odor or dust from permitted industrial facilities and others regulated under the Mecklenburg County Air Pollution Control Ordinance (MCAPCO) (i.e. Regulations 1.5107 – “Control and Prohibition of Visible Emissions,” 1.5113 - “Determination of Maximum Feasible Controls for Odorous Emissions,” and 1.5108. – “Dust and Related Material”) http://airquality.mecknc.gov/mcapco.

How do I report an odor/dust complaint?

- When an odor or dust issue is occurring, please report from our http://airquality.mecknc.gov/AQHelp or call 704-336-5430.
- You will need to provide the following information:
  - Your name, address, and telephone number
  - The time and date the air quality incident occurred and whether it is continuing
  - The nature of the air quality complaint (dust, odor, visible emissions, or other)
  - The name and address of the alleged source and the type of operation causing it, if known

Do I have to identify myself when I call to report an air quality complaint?

- Yes, MCAQ requests this information to assist with our investigation and for future follow-up. For example, MCAQ may need to contact you to learn more about the issue and pattern of occurrence. We will make an effort to protect your identity throughout the investigation.

What enforcement action is allowed by MCAPCO?

- If MCAQ can determine a pattern of objectionable odors or dust and associate them with a particular source, MCAQ can require the identified facility to identify and put into place measures to minimize the odor/dust. These measures may include management practices or employing appropriate control technology. MCAQ cannot require the total elimination of an odor/dust.

What are the expectations for citizens reporting nuisance/objectionable odor or dust?

- Notify MCAQ as soon as possible when an objectionable odor or dust problem is noticed.
- Do not expect odors or dust to be eliminated. Expect facility action to minimize odor or dust.
- If a citizen reporting an odor or dust remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation(s), they may take civil action at their discretion.
What are the expectations for a facility emitting an objectionable odor/dust?

- MCAQ’s role is first as a facilitator, secondly as a mediator and lastly as a regulator.
- The facility is expected to be cooperative, open, and timely in addressing odor/dust issues.
- The facility should identify on-site odor/dust source(s) and act accordingly.
- Proactive interaction with the neighborhood/community or individuals involved is expected.
- The facility may need to demonstrate that maximum feasible controls are being used as determined by MCAPCO.

Are there recommendations from Mecklenburg County Air Quality on how to monitor odors from regulated facilities?

- Odors are subjective in nature, and MCAQ has no specific recommendations, techniques nor methodologies on how to “monitor” odors other than complaint response. If you notice any patterns relative to the odor such as time of day, day of the week, weather conditions, etc. please report this when you submit the online form or call our office. This information is often useful in the investigation. In addition, we have a Citizen’s Objectionable Odor Log you can complete and return to MCAQ. Often, we can establish patterns based on a completed log. You can access the log here: https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/AirQuality/PermittingRegulations/Documents/citizenodorlog.pdf
- MCAQ cannot take enforcement action based on citizen monitoring.