



## Odour Nuisance General

Odour can cause a nuisance to neighbours and interfere with their normal daily activities. If severe enough, it can impact on people's health. In a residential situation, odour can come from numerous sources, including compost heaps, rotting vegetation, fertilisers and rubbish. This fact sheet includes information that may assist residents to reduce odour and meet legal requirements.

### Be a Good Neighbour

If there is an odour nuisance in your area or you have received a letter from Council regarding an Odour Nuisance take the time to talk to neighbours. Find out what concerns they may have and ask for suggestions about solving any problems. In many cases an agreement can be reached that satisfies everyone's needs.

### The Law

The *Environmental Protection Act 1994* introduced by the State Government include controls for odour. Council is legally required to enforce these controls when odour problems occur from residential properties. If issues between neighbours cannot be resolved and further complaints are made, Council will commence a formal investigation. If the odour is found to be a nuisance, Council may issue the residence causing the odour with a 'direction notice'.

A direction notice will detail what offence has taken place and the time frame that the offender has to rectify the problem. If the direction notice is not complied with, Council may then issue an on-the-spot fine and take further enforcement action.

### The Criteria

When investigating an odour complaint, Council will consider:

- The amount of odour, contaminant or pollutant being emitted;
- The duration and rate of emission and the emissions characteristics and qualities;

- The sensitivity of the environment into which the drift is being emitted and the impact that it has had or may have; and
- Views of any other neighbours or complainants.

### Ways to reduce odour emissions

#### 1. Control the Odour Source

As odour is caused by something else and is not the source of the problem, it is often easier to control what is causing the odour than to try and control the odour itself. The easiest way to do this is to remove the source of the odour from your property. If you can't remove the source, try to contain it or cover it up. It is also beneficial to ensure that you are maintaining the source in accordance with best practice for example; well managed compost will produce less of an odour than compost that is not looked after.

#### 2. Good Housekeeping

Keep your property tidy and do not allow vegetation or rubbish to accumulate. This will prevent material from rotting and creating an odour. Take the time to bag or wrap all rubbish and dispose of it properly. Minimise rubbish by composting and mulching organic waste and garden clippings and recycling plastic, glass, paper and cans.

#### 3. Observing Weather Conditions

If possible, consider the weather conditions before starting work that will create odour. For example, when working with fertilisers, try to schedule work when the weather is fine rather than in gusty or strong winds. Odour complaints are more frequent in summer as people are outdoors more often and houses are left open for ventilation. Remember, do not fertilise gardens in wet weather, as run-off to stormwater drains is harmful to creeks and rivers.

#### 4. Physical Barriers

Where possible, enclose or cover compost bins or piles of vegetation. Compost also requires regular turning and aerating. This may help to reduce odour problems.

**5. Water Use**

Spraying of water onto fertiliser may help it break down quicker and absorb into the topsoil more rapidly. It is important that enough water is used to keep the topsoil layer damp and that spraying is completed before strong breezes develop.

For further information on this topic, please contact Gladstone Regional Council's Environmental Health Section on (07) 4977 6821.

If the odour is related to a septic tank please contact Gladstone Regional Council's - Plumbing Services Section on (07) 4976 6851.

**How can you contact us?**

(07) 4970 0700

STD CALLS: 1300 733 343

For those residents who currently incur STD call rates when contacting their local customer service centre



(07) 4975 8500



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