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# MAPA PRESS RELEASE

## Asphalt Plants – Know the Facts

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Thousands of communities across the country coexist peacefully with asphalt pavement mix plants. These facilities are in urban, suburban, and rural areas, and most of them are known as good neighbors who are engaged with their community and dedicated to sustainable operations. However, there is a lot of misleading and often daunting information about asphalt plants and products. Therefore, it's important to understand what is fact and what is fiction.

The asphalt pavement industry has a long record of working with the environmental regulatory agencies including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to accurately determine the amount of emissions from an average asphalt plant. The studies show that asphalt plant emissions are typically very low and controlled.

Some of the emissions from asphalt pavement plants (as well as other combustion sources) are regulated as air pollutants. The relevant question when considering the potential air quality and human health impacts of emissions from an asphalt plant (or any other source of air emissions) is whether the emissions are great enough to affect local air quality and health, or whether these emissions are instead low enough to be harmless.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has collected extensive test data from asphalt pavement plants.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of this testing, the EPA has determined that even very large facilities – which produce 1,000,000 tons per year of asphalt pavement – are not major sources of air pollution,<sup>2</sup> and easily satisfy federal and state regulatory requirements designed to protect public health. **In 2002, the EPA officially delisted asphalt plants as a major source of air pollution.** Therefore, it has been determined that asphalt plant emissions are very low and getting lower due to innovative control systems and manufacturing technology.

A typical facility produces about 200,000 tons per year of asphalt pavement and plants are equipped with air pollution controls that curb dust and vapor emissions. As comparative context, the amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) released from the stack of an asphalt pavement plant in a year equate to the same yearly emissions from 20 residential fireplaces or 5 gasoline filling stations.

Asphalt plants are an essential component of our transportation infrastructure. Today, more than 94% of the nation's 2 million miles of paved streets and highways are surfaced with asphalt.<sup>3</sup> That's because state and federal highway departments have long known that asphalt pavements are smooth, cost-effective to construct and maintain, exceptionally durable, environmentally friendly, and 100% recyclable. In addition to paving Minnesota's interstate and local roadways, asphalt pavements can provide solutions for multiple facilities including bus rapid transit lanes, airport runways, parking lots, walking/biking trails, cycle tracks, tennis courts, and more.

Asphalt plants are good neighbors, who are active in their community. They offer opportunities for local employment, and often contribute to community events with volunteers and financial donations. Many asphalt plants are family-owned and -operated and have been an important part of their community for decades. To learn more about the asphalt industry and asphalt plants, visit [www.AsphaltisBest.com](http://www.AsphaltisBest.com), [www.BeyondRoads.com](http://www.BeyondRoads.com) and [www.AsphaltFacts.com](http://www.AsphaltFacts.com).

References:

1. See <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/ap42/ch11/related/c11s01.html> and associated links, especially the Emission Assessment Report at <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/ap42/ch11/related/ea-report.pdf>.
2. See Federal Register: February 12, 2002, Volume 67, No. 29, pp. 6521-6536, available at [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2002\\_register&docid=02-3348-filed.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2002_register&docid=02-3348-filed.pdf). Note that asphalt pavement plants there are called "asphalt concrete manufacturing plants."
3. See <https://www.asphaltpavement.org/PDFs/SR206-EnvironmentalImpact-web.pdf>.