

## **Questions and Answers Regarding MAT Asphalt Plant and Environmental and Public Health Considerations**

### **How is asphalt made?**

Asphalt is made by combining sand and crushed rock with heated binder, which we get from oil refineries. It is then heated to a temperature of over 300 degrees at our plant before it is carried to job sites by our dump trucks.

### **Is asphalt environmentally friendly?**

Yes! Asphalt is 100% recyclable and is the most recycled product in the United States, ahead of aluminum cans, news, print, and plastic and glass beverage containers. When old asphalt from a road or parking lot is removed (by milling), it is crushed, mixed with additional aggregate and binder to make new hot mix asphalt.

### **What do asphalt plants do to ensure proper handling of chemicals?**

There are three main chemicals used at asphalt plants: 1) fuel oil for the burner, which is the same kind of fuel oil you may be using to heat your home; 2) fuel for vehicles, which the same product you buy at the gas station; and 3) at some facilities, solvents for the quality control lab. These solvents are used in small quantities with great care, and new lab procedures are quickly making solvents obsolete. By federal law, an Asphalt Mix facility must keep these products, including the fuel oil, either in underground tanks that meet strict EPA standards, or in above-ground tanks surrounded by berms that would hold ALL the contents in the event of a spill. Even if there were a spill or leak, Asphalt Cement starts to harden the moment it cools. Unless it's 250 degrees Fahrenheit outside, it simply cannot travel over the ground more than a few feet. It will not penetrate the soil more than an inch or two before solidifying. Asphalt Cement does not mix with, or become soluble, in water.

### **What recourse can residents take if MAT Asphalt does not comply with EPA regulations?**

According to the EPA, emissions from this plant are not to pose a public health hazard. This is especially true for all plants that make road asphalt, since the emissions of carcinogens from these facilities are very low. However, our office will not hide behind any written rules that have little to do with our reality. Alderman Cardenas lives closest to the operation and will breathe and smell the same air as every resident. If the plant proves to be a danger to the community and does not comply with EPA regulations, we will take the necessary steps to ensure it relocates elsewhere.

### **How will the plant's operators rectify odor nuisance?**

MAT Asphalt has agreed to hire a professional odor consultant to explore a vaporization refrigeration system. Fortunately, there is also a process additive that can be mixed directly into the liquid asphalt used to control odorous emissions. Before the odors become airborne, they will be eliminated. These custom solutions/additives ONLY use natural ingredients to eliminate industrial odors without use of harsh chemicals or masking fragrances.

Odor sensitivity and response to odors differs from person to person. If you do smell odors from an asphalt plant, they are not necessarily at levels that can cause adverse health effects. The construction permit from the Illinois EPA specifically forbids the plant from creating an odor nuisance. So if the asphalt plant does become an odor nuisance, operators must rectify it immediately.

### **How will MAT Asphalt be held accountable for any decrease in air quality?**

McKinley Park will not bear the brunt of environmental degradation, complaints will not go unaddressed. The Department of Public Health (CDPH) will regulate this plant, and as Chairman of the Committee on Health and Environmental Protection, Alderman Cardenas will make sure that inspections are done routinely and randomly. CDPH inspectors will write tickets if violations occur, file inspection reports and gather evidence against the plant if it fails to meet local, state and federal regulations. Air monitoring systems will be placed around the community and will provide real-time data. We will instantly become aware if the plant is not in compliance.

### **What are the consequences the plant will face?**

Once operating, if the asphalt plant continues to be a source of concern, and if it fails to meet emissions standards under federal, state and city regulations, we will move forward with the necessary action to revoke its operating license.

**Will the community have a say in how the asphalt trucks traffic is planned?**

A traffic study and plan is underway. We will share it with CMAP and the MPDC and move forward with a cohesive plan that includes community input and recommendations.

**What is being done to ensure that McKinley Park and the rest of its PMD does not become a haven for industries similar to MAT Asphalt?**

Chicago's industrial land use policies have not been updated in approximately 25 years. As the city outlines its Industrial Corridor Modernization Plan, the implementation of reforms to our environmental permitting and inspection program is more important than ever.

Alderman Cardenas is working to introduce legislation which would amend the municipal environmental enforcement code by requiring that all permit applications which pose hazardous impacts on public health and the environment go through a hearing process. This will allow members of the public and all Aldermen to formally weigh in on the process before CDPH approves a permit.

**What do asphalt plants do to maintain good relationships with the communities around them?**

More than 30 years ago, Asphalt Mix facilities often generated noticeable levels of dust, smoke, odors, and noise. **But two things have brought big changes.** One was the EPA's New Source Performance Standards, which went into effect in 1973. These required HMA producers to pass strict emission standards and install control systems to prevent the release of dust and smoke into the air. A facility must also meet stringent "visible emissions" tests in order to comply with regulations. **EPA now acknowledges that HMA facilities are not a major source of emissions.** It's in the owner's best interest to make sure that all the equipment is operating at peak efficiency – which means producing very little in the way of emissions. Asphalt mix producers want to be good neighbors. They strive to build clean, quiet facilities compatible with the rest of the neighborhood.