



NSPE Position Statement No. 1742—Air Pollution

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The National Society of Professional Engineers supports efforts that are necessary to achieve and maintain levels of air quality protecting human health, welfare, and safety, preventing injury to plant and animal life and the environment. Therefore it is incumbent upon the engineering profession to provide leadership, based upon sound engineering and economic principles, for the prevention and control of air pollution.

Introduction

Responsibility for prevention and control of air pollution involves local, state, and federal levels of government, private industry, and individual citizens. Abatement of air pollution through regulatory action should be the primary responsibility of state government, subject to the required standards and operating procedures of the federal government, and with assistance of local government when feasible.

Federal Government Responsibility

a. Reinforcement of Government and Private Industry

To strengthen the national effort for prevention and control of air pollution, the federal government should be involved in those activities where it can effectively reinforce local and state governments and private industry in their efforts to control air pollution and improve air quality. It should encourage the development of effective state and local programs and provide financial assistance for those programs.

b. Research and Development

In the area of air quality research and development and demonstrations, the federal government should conduct and support intramural programs, contracts, and grants in cooperation with public and private institutions. The results of such programs should be disseminated to all levels of government and private industry by the federal government.

c. Personnel Training

In order to enforce air quality standards and to explore new developments in combating air pollution, the federal government should stimulate and financially support training and educational activities to increase the quality and availability of personnel essential for such activities. The federal government, states, and technical and professional societies should sponsor conferences, seminars, and other methods for training and educating engineering, technical, and other personnel in the law and in air pollution control technology.

d. Federal Activities and Installations

Air pollution resulting from federal installations and federal activities is the direct responsibility of the federal government. It should establish procedures to monitor air emissions from federal facilities to ensure that all air pollution standards and guidelines are met.

e. Acid Rain and Toxic Air Pollutants

Acid rain, toxic air pollutants, and greenhouse gas emissions are a major threat to human health and welfare, as well as plant and animal life. Based on recognized adequate research of the causes and effects of the various forms of air pollution, the federal government should establish environmentally and economically sound standards for the reduction and control of these emissions.