



## CPCB's New Guidelines for India's Stone Crusher Sector

**For Prelims:** [Central Pollution Control Board \(CPCB\)](#), [Environment Pollution \(Prevention & Control\) Authority \(EPCA\)](#), [Graded Response Action Plan \(GRAP\)](#), [Water \(Prevention and Control of Pollution\) Act, 1974](#).

**For Mains:** Issue Associated with Stone Crushing Units.

### Why in News?

- **Stone crushing units** have long been recognized as major **contributors to fugitive dust emissions and severe air pollution**.
  - In response to the growing concern, the [Central Pollution Control Board \(CPCB\)](#) recently published the **Environmental Guidelines for Stone Crushing Units**.
  - The guidelines are in alignment with the **recommendations made by New Delhi-based non-profit Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)**.

### What are the Key Guidelines Released By CPCB?

- The CPCB guidelines cover various aspects of stone crushing, such as **source emissions, product storage, transportation, water consumption and legal compliance**. Some of the key features of the guidelines are:
  - The stone crushers should **obtain consent to establish and consent to operate (CTO) from the [State Pollution Control Board \(SPCB\)](#)** before starting their operations.
  - Stone crushing unit shall comply with **emission norms prescribed under the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986** and conditions laid down in CTO by concerned SPCB/PCC.
  - They **should install adequate pollution control devices, such as dust suppression systems, covers, screens and sprinklers**, to reduce the dust emissions from crushing, loading and unloading activities.
    - They should also store their products in **covered areas or silos to prevent wind-blown dust**.
  - The stone crushers **should use water judiciously and ensure its availability and quality** and procure their raw material from legal sources and maintain proper records of their transactions.
  - A **District Level Committee to be constituted** under chairmanship of District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner so that **surprise inspections for surveillance of stone crushing units located under their jurisdiction** can be carried out on regular basis.
  - **Health survey of workers should be carried out** by the stone crusher on half-yearly basis.

### What is the Issue Associated with Stone Crushing Units?

- **About:**
  - **Stone crushing units** are one of the major sources of **air pollution in India**.

- These units produce **crushed stones that are used as raw material for various construction activities.**
- However, the process of stone crushing also **generates a lot of dust that affects the health of the workers** and the surrounding population.
  - Moreover, stone mining is also associated with this activity, which further degrades the environment.
- **Recent Instances:**
  - In December 2022, a draft notification by Haryana government proposed **easing of proximity norms for setting up new stone crushers near residential areas.** This was met with criticism by environmentalists who feared that it would worsen air quality and impact farmland.
  - In June 2023, a report by CSE claimed that **many stone crushers in India were operating without consent or environmental clearance from SPCBs.**
  - The report also highlighted that most of these units did not have proper pollution control devices or monitoring systems.
- **Steps to Address the Issue:**
  - The [Environment Pollution \(Prevention & Control\) Authority \(EPCA\)](#) banned the **operation of the stone crusher units, along with brick kilns and hot mix plants,** under the implementation of the [Graded Response Action Plan \(GRAP\).](#)
    - **GRAP** includes the measures which will be taken by different government agencies to prevent worsening of **Air Quality of Delhi-NCR and prevent PM10 and PM2.5 levels** to go beyond the 'moderate' national [Air Quality Index \(AQI\)](#) category.
  - In May 2023, a study by researchers from Pune University revealed that **a model stone crusher unit in Pune had successfully implemented pollution control measures and reduced its dust emissions by 90%.** The study suggested that such units could serve as examples for other stone crushers in India.

## What is the Central Pollution Control Board?

- The **CPCB** is a statutory organisation that was established in **September 1974** under the [Water \(Prevention and Control of Pollution\) Act, 1974.](#)
  - **Further,** CPCB was entrusted with the powers and functions under the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.**
  - It is the apex body for environmental protection and pollution control in India. It functions under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** and coordinates with the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and other agencies.
- The CPCB has various divisions that deal with different aspects of pollution control such as **air quality management, water quality management, hazardous waste management, environmental assessment, laboratory services,** information technology, public participation etc.

## Conclusion

- While the CPCB guidelines encompass several crucial aspects of pollution control, some areas require further attention and improvement. The **guidelines do not address noise emissions and the timing of operations for standalone stone crushers,** which often cause inconvenience and discomfort to nearby residents.
- Additionally, it is essential to **provide specific timelines for stone crushers to adhere to the guidelines and to direct SPCBs to enforce the guidelines effectively.**

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q.1 In the cities of our country, which among the following atmospheric gases are normally**

**considered in calculating the value of Air Quality Index? (2016)**

1. Carbon dioxide
2. Carbon monoxide
3. Nitrogen dioxide
4. Sulfur dioxide
5. Methane

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(b) 2, 3 and 4 only  
(c) 1, 4 and 5 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

**Ans: (b)**

**Mains**

**Q.1** Describe the key points of the revised Global Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs) recently released by the World Health Organisation (WHO). How are these different from its last update in 2005? What changes in India's National Clean Air Programme are required to achieve revised standards? **(2021)**

[Source: DTE](#)

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