



# ASPASA

Aggregate & Sand Producers  
Association of Southern Africa

## Quarries and the Environment

### Recognising our Responsibilities

ASPASA takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously. Quarries today aim to be as unobtrusive as possible to their surrounding habitats, be they in a rural or urban areas.

Unlike the industry of the past, newly established quarry and pit sites are established in a manner which minimizes, as far as possible, the visual impact of the operation. Quarry operators take pride in the fact that new sites are established with strong emphasis on minimizing visual amenity, and extensive landscaping is undertaken to reduce the impact of quarries and extraction pits. Wherever possible, existing sites are being landscaped and screen planting introduced in order to reduce their visual presence.

Methods now being employed to shield operations from public view include the construction of raised earth banks or “bunds”, and the planting of trees or shelterbelts along the margins of the site. Painting site buildings and equipment in colours to harmonize with the surrounding landscape also serves to reduce visual impact.

Quarries are also required to comply with various resources consent conditions issued under the various legislations. These conditions are for the protection of matters pertaining to land, air and water quality. Discharges to air are stringently controlled within the extractive industry, to ensure a healthy work environment.

The only by-product from the quarrying or aggregate production process is quarry overburden (the ground overlying a rock formation which cannot be used for the production of aggregate). This is normally placed into overburden disposal sites in a managed manner, contoured and re-vegetated to blend with the surroundings landscape. Quarry overburden is a 100% natural product and offers no pollution risk.

All machinery is fitted with effective mufflers, and techniques are used to dampen noise that results from processing activity. Noise is minimal outside the immediate site boundaries, and is stringently monitored to ensure compliance with noise limits. Quarry blasting is undertaken by fully trained and qualified blasters. Impulse and ground vibration resulting from blasting is to comply with limits. In sensitive or urban areas, neighbours are informed of any explosive work beforehand as part of the ongoing consultation process.

Rehabilitation of quarries and other extraction sites continues to be a key issue within the aggregates industry. The Association provides assistance and advice to its members on matters relating to this issue in the About Face RSA Audit. An industry Environmental Audit is undertaken bi-annually.

South Africa has all-encompassing legislation relating to “land use”. The Mineral Petroleum Resources Development Act requires each quarry and pit owner to prepare detailed Quarry Management Plans and Environmental Management Plans which incorporate all aspects of a quarry operation: environmental control, future development and details of good practice for the efficient and safe operation of the site.

[www.aspasa.co.za](http://www.aspasa.co.za)

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