

West Midlands State of the Environment

Regulated business

Businesses can contribute to an improved environment by preventing pollution, minimising their waste and using efficient processes. As a modern regulator, the Environment Agency works to ensure the right balance between environmental improvements and operator performance, and takes action against poor performing or illegal operators.

We are responsible for regulating the most polluting industries in England and Wales, under the national Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) regime. EPR regulates emissions to air and water, and on land, as well as other environmental considerations. EPRs cover industry and waste regulation, including: the metals sector, food and drink, bio-waste and landfill.

We use Operator Performance Risk Appraisal (Opra) and compliance assessment plans to target our regulatory effort on poor performing companies. Opra allows regulated businesses working with us to accurately and consistently self-assess the environmental risks posed by their facilities' operations.

Businesses in the West Midlands that are regulated by us have already made some big improvements. Even with more sites reporting to us, emissions to air and water have fallen, and there are fewer pollution incidents. Fewer sites are breaching their permits and performing poorly. However improvements are needed with respect to greenhouse gas emissions, waste production and resource efficiency to offset the impacts of climate change, an increasing population, and potentially increasing industrial productivity during the economic recovery.

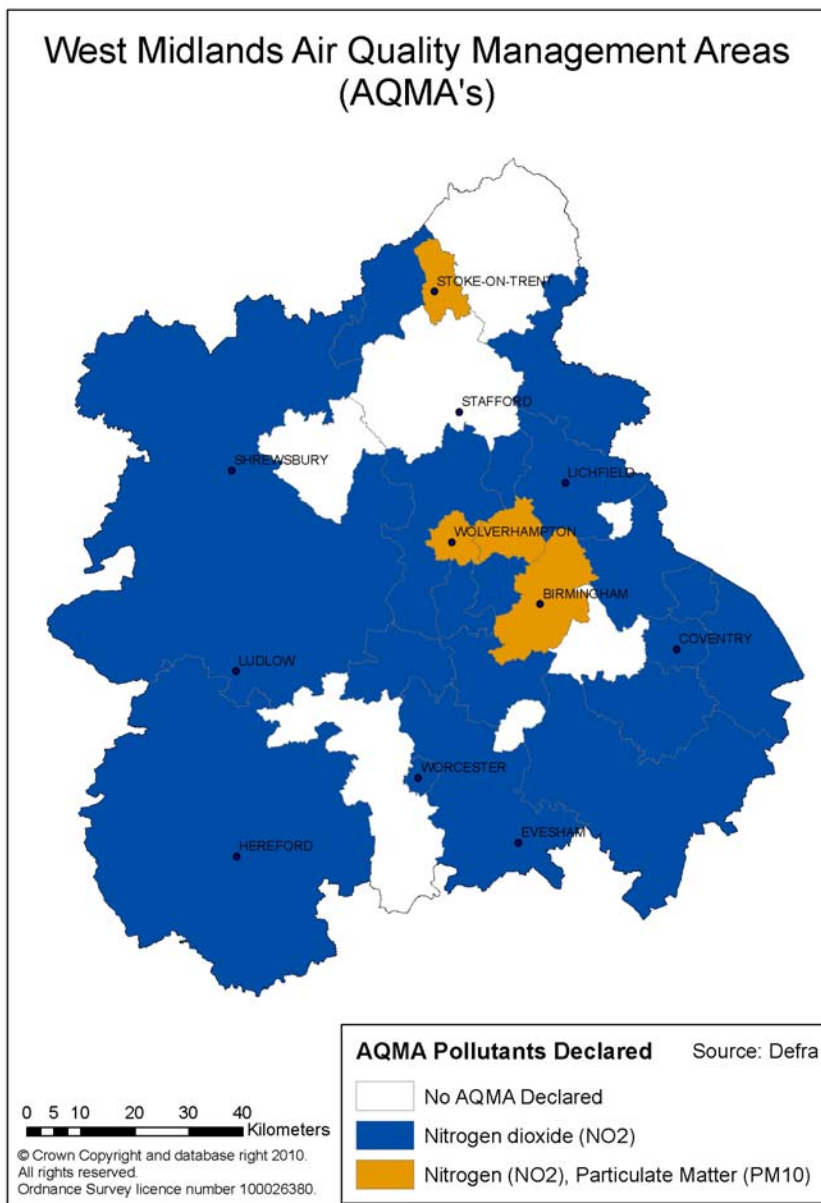
At a glance

- Within the West Midlands 23 Local Authorities have declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). All of these have declared nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) as a pollutant, with four local authorities also declaring particulate matter <10 µm (PM₁₀) as a pollutant.
- The Environment Agency has committed to reduce the annual emissions to air of eight priority pollutants (namely 1,3 butadiene, benzene, carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen oxide, non-methane volatile organic carbon, PM₁₀, and sulphur dioxide) from our regulated industry, as part of the government's Air Quality Strategy and the requirements of the National Ceiling Directive.
- Regulated industries in the West Midlands contribute to only two per cent of national releases of these eight key air pollutants.
- Since 2005 regulated industry in the West Midlands has seen an overall reduction of 79 per cent in these priority pollutants. Emissions of nitrogen oxides and lead have fallen by 94 per cent and 86 per cent respectively. Since 2005 recorded emissions of PM₁₀ have increased as more industry sectors have come into the regulatory framework, in particular intensive agricultural units.

- In 2009, 60 per cent West Midlands EPR regulated industrial sites were rated with a full compliance rating in Opra band A, with only 6 per cent in the poorest compliance bands of D, E and F.
- There are currently 151 PPC regulated sites in the West Midlands that have accredited environmental management systems, with 33 per cent of these waste management facilities.

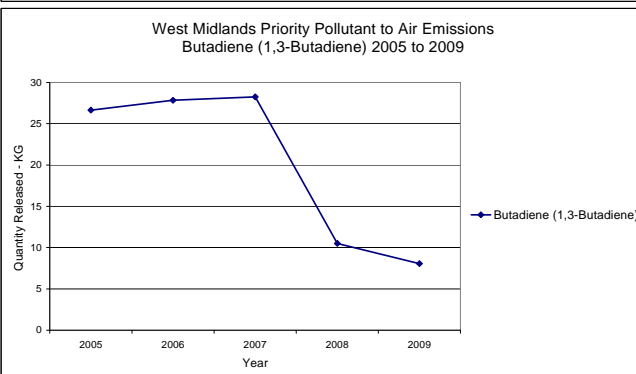
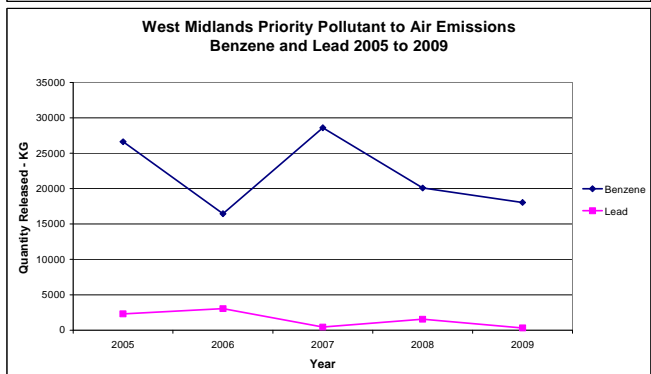
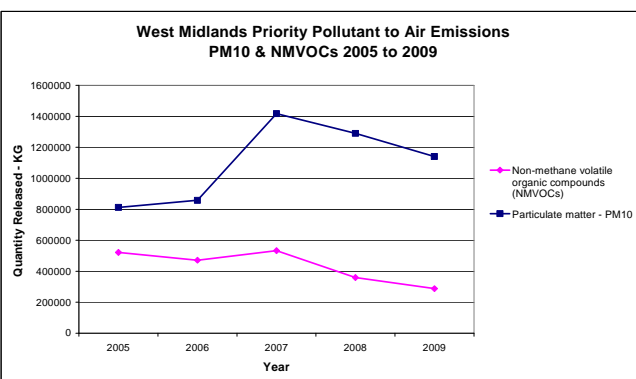
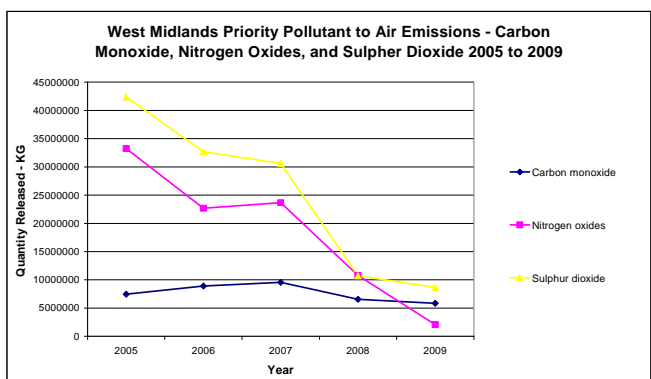
Data and trends

To protect human health and the environment, the government prioritised eight main pollutants to air under the UK Air Quality Strategy, which have set limit values. Where these limits are not likely to be achieved, local authorities declare an AQMA. These areas may range from just one or two streets to a much greater area. The West Midlands has 23 AQMA's, identified in the map below.



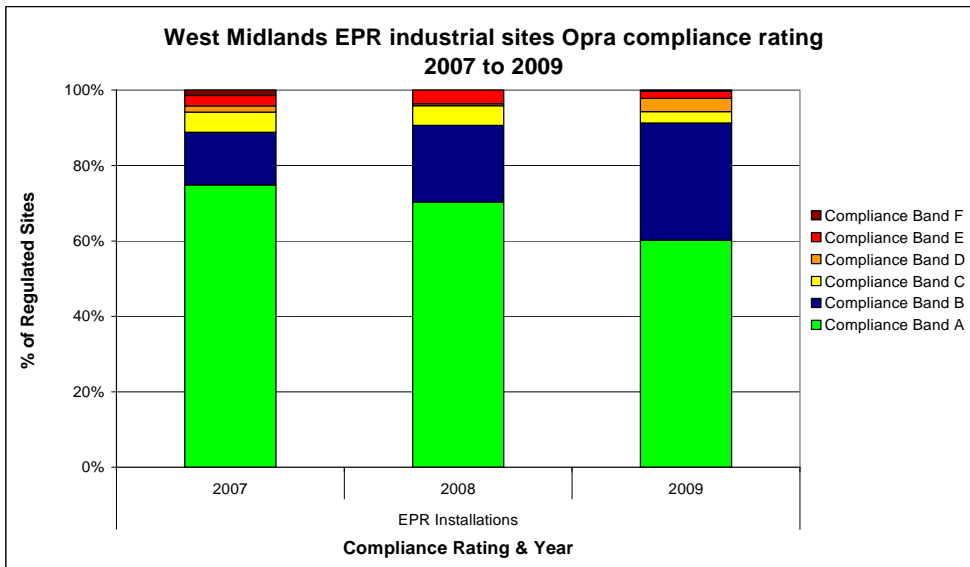
As part of our contribution to deliver the government's Air Quality Strategy and the requirements of the National Emission Ceiling Directive the Environment Agency aims to reduce emissions of eight priority pollutants from our regulated sites across England and Wales.

All industrial sites regulated under EPR are required to provide returns for air emissions through our Pollution Inventory database. In 2009 regulated industries in the West Midlands Region contributed to only two per cent of the national releases of these eight air pollutants. Since 2005 emissions of nitrogen oxides and lead have fallen by 94 per cent and 86 per cent respectively. In the same period emissions of PM10 have increased by 40 per cent, which is partly due to more industry sectors coming into the regulatory framework, in particular intensive agricultural units.

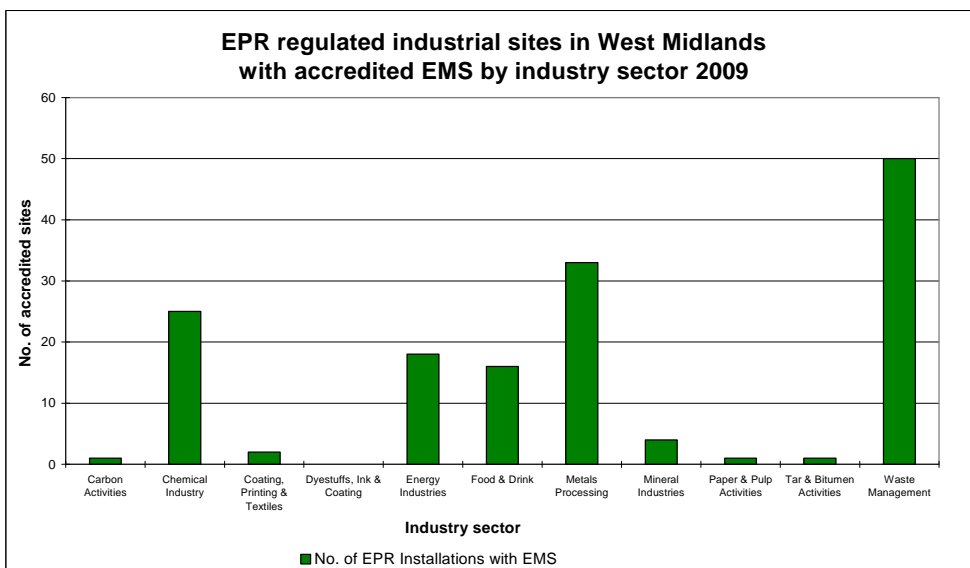


We use our Opra and Compliance Assessment Plans to target our regulatory effort on the poorest performing operators. Opra provides a risk rating from A to F with bands D, E and F the poorest performing compliance bands. Compliance scores allow performance of a regulated site to be assessed annually so we can identify where to target our effort.

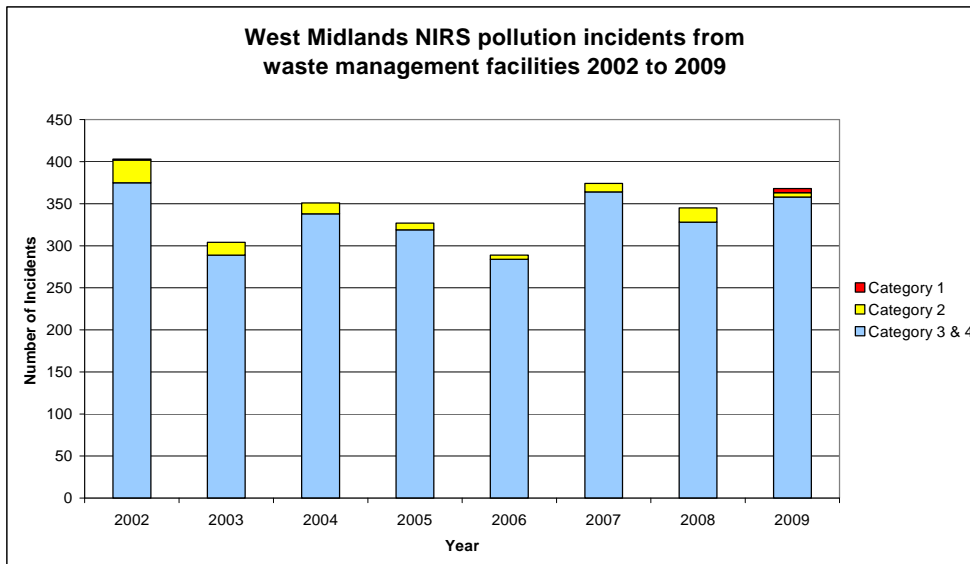
At the end of 2009 there were 21 (5.7 per cent) EPR regulated industrial sites were in compliance bands D, E and F, with 60 per cent in compliance band A.



At the end of 2009 there were 151 EPR regulated industrial sites in the West Midlands with accredited environmental management systems (EMS). Since 2006 the number of EPR Installations with an effective EMS within their Opra site profile has risen by 139. The biggest increase has been in the waste management sector, with an additional 50 facilities implementing an effective EMS. Waste management sector accounts for 33 per cent of accredited EMS industrial sites in the West Midlands.



In 2009 there were 368 pollution incidents recorded in our National Incident Reporting System (NIRS) attributed to waste management facilities in the West Midlands. These waste management facilities include both EPR regulated sites and waste facilities exempt from EPR. Between 2002 and 2009 the number of pollution incidents from waste management facilities has shown a variable trend, with an overall reduction of nine per cent.



Our role

As a regulatory of industry the Environment Agency is changing how it works with regulated industry to give more and better advice and help business be the best they can, and improve their environmental performance. In addition we provide guidance on how companies can obtain externally verified Environmental Management systems.

We work directly with regulated sites to reduce pollution to air and improve air quality. Using evidence we are able to target our regulatory efforts at reducing emissions of pollutants to air from the major emitters in the region.

We also work with industry sectors to encourage the more efficient use of resources by businesses in the West Midlands. This will be achieved by

- Promoting the environmental, economic and social benefits of sustainable procurement and developing sustainable procurement partnerships.
- Working with our regional partners and key business sectors to encourage the more efficient use of resources.
- Ensure those businesses we regulate undertake resource, energy and water efficiency audits and implement their findings.

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