



## TOP STORIES

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## Agency Works To Monitor Pollution Control In Lower Manhattan

By: Kafi Drexel

*There was a lot of concern about the air quality in Lower Manhattan in the weeks and months following the World Trade Center attacks. With the rebuilding at the site continuing and hundreds of other construction projects underway, NY1 Health & Fitness reporter Kafi Drexel got an inside look at what's happening now to help control pollution.*

The Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center is the state and city agency that has the task of monitoring and overseeing pollution control over the massive World Trade Center project, one of the largest ongoing construction projects in the world, and nearly 200 other project underway in Lower Manhattan.

"We have multiple air monitoring stations all over the community and what we do is we take readings to make sure that the air quality in particulate matter, which of course is related to fossil fuel burning and also dust control for the construction sites," says LMCCC Director of Environmental Compliance Thomas Kunkel. "We want to make sure that it is at a safe level and a reasonable level."

To help reduce emissions from construction there are several measures in place. Large trucks heading in and out of the World Trade Center site and other parts of Lower Manhattan are not permitted to idle. They also operate with ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel.

They may just look like tiny, little boxes, but filters are placed on cranes and other construction equipment to also help control air quality.

Working with the New York State Department of Transportation, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Port Authority, environmental experts at the LMCC say they've been able to keep emissions from trucks and dust particles in the air from construction sites below National Air Quality Standards.



"Normally if you looked across the construction site you might see plumes of dust. They're controlled on the World Trade Center site," Kunkel says. "You would normally see coming out of the exhaust on the construction equipment an almost blue or purple haze almost coming out of the exhaust pipe. With the ultra-low sulfur fuel and diesel particulate filter, you don't see that."

Even the blue walls around the construction sites serve more of a purpose than just security.

"The barriers themselves, they're very informative, but they also have a screen to them where they also keep any dust from the site and actually keep it out of the community," Kunkel says.

"It seems to be a model that could be duplicated elsewhere," says Dr. Morton Lippmann of the Nelson Institute of Environmental Medicine at NYU Langone Medical Center. "Clearly there is some extra expense in putting in these control measures. On the other hand, if you are reducing the health impacts of the occupationally exposed and the general community, there are real benefits in terms of reduced health effects and there financial impacts."

And that's part of the plan. Environmental experts at the LMCCC say they hope to see what they're doing introduced to other parts of the city and the world.

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