Odour regulations in Europe – different approaches

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Odour measurement, control, reduction measures and monitoring in the Baltic countries

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Riga
“Odour regulations in Europe – different approaches (including, use of ‘odour hour’ and hourly average odour concentration for regulatory purposes) and associated assessment methods (measurements and dispersion modelling)”
Contents

• Introduction
  – Background information
  – FIDOL framework
• Odour regulation – overview
• History of odour regulation in Europe
• Dispersion modelling of odours
  – UK approach
  – Different approaches
    • Hourly average/percentile
    • ‘Odour hour’
• Odour measurements: overview
• An example of a novel approach to odour regulation
Introduction

• We can recognise/distinguish thousands of different smells
• But we’re not very good at describing them
  – Don’t have names for different smells (compare - colours)
• We tend to prefer scents that we can identify correctly
• We have around 5 million olfactory receptor neurons
  – Rabbits have around 100 million
  – Dogs have around 220 million
• Our olfactory receptors are directly connected to the most ancient and primitive part of the brain
  – Linked to emotions, memories
• We can respond to odour over a 1 to 5 second interval (a single breath)
• The most odorous compound is mercaptan – used as a marker for natural gas (methane has no odour)
Factors that affect the impact of odours: FIDOL

- A framework for assessing the impact of odours
- **Frequency**
- **Intensity**
- **Duration**
- **Odour unpleasantness / Offensiveness**
- **Location**

(Sometimes FIDOR, where R = receptor sensitivity)

- These are important concepts to bear in mind for odour regulation
- Will go through each of these in turn...
**FIDOL: Frequency**

- Frequency of detection
- How often an individual is exposed to odour
- Olfactory fatigue / adaptation:
  - An individual can get ‘used to’ the odour - unable to detect the odour after a certain period
  - But if odour has an on/off/on pattern, this is disrupted
- Assessment implications:
  - Averaging time, peak-to-mean concentrations
FIDOL: Intensity

• The strength (concentration) of the odour
• More specifically, the *perception* of the strength of the odour
  – The relationship between a stimulus and the perceived strength is not necessarily linear (smell, noise, brightness, etc), e.g. Steven’s power law / Weber-Fechner law
  – The intensity of an odour is a logarithmic function of its concentration.
• Common standard measure of odour strength: ‘European odour unit’ (ou$\text{E}$):
  – the quantity of a malodorous substance, which, when vaporised in one cubic metre of neutral gas, at standard conditions, induces a physiological reaction in the olfactory organs for at least half of the members of the odour evaluation panel
FIDOL: Duration

- Exposure duration
  - Hourly / daily / seasonal patterns of exposure
  - Length of particular odour ‘episode’

- Assessment implications:
  - Related to ‘frequency’
  - Hours of operation of process
  - How can this be taken into account in measurements, modelling, etc?
FIDOL: Offensiveness / Odour unpleasantness

• Mixture of the character and the hedonic tone
  • The character is the description, e.g. ‘fishy’, ‘sweet’
  • The hedonic tone is the ‘acceptability’
    – Is it pleasant or unpleasant?
    – Landfill vs baking bread

• Hedonic tone ‘scores’ are sometimes used
  – also referred to as ‘Dravnieks’.
  – Andrew Dravnieks – studied in Riga

• Assessment implications:
  – How to treat different processes?
  – What thresholds to compare model output against?
FIDOL: Location

• The nature of the surrounding area and sensitivity of nearby receptors
• Sensitivity of individuals: people have different detection thresholds
  – “Statutory nuisance uses the concept of the response of the average, reasonable person” – UK guidance
• What is the land use of the surrounding area?
  – Residential vs industrial
  – Urban vs rural
  – High population vs low population
• Assessment implications:
  – Careful consideration of local land use and sensitive receptors
Complicating factors - odour

• Usually complex mixtures of compounds (focus of this talk)
  – Difficult to measure
  – Synergistic effects – impact greater than the sum of its parts
  – Masking effects - impact less than the sum of its parts

• Subjective - what constitutes a ‘nuisance’?

• Sources are often complex
  – Different types of sources
  – Often fugitive
  – Often transient
ODOUR REGULATION - OVERVIEW
Odour regulation

- Three approaches of regulation:
  - Qualitative
    - e.g. Ensure no complaints
  - Quantitative
    - e.g. Dispersion modelling, measurements
  - Operational
    - e.g. Setback distances (distance between sensitive receptors and odour sources)

- Currently, the most common form of quantitative assessment is measurement of odour emissions at the source, used as input to a dispersion model
Why use dispersion modelling?

- Ambient odours are difficult to measure
  - Human nose is highly effective at measuring odour
    - Sensitive, fast and can distinguish a wide range of compounds
  - Olfactometry is an important tool in odour assessment
    - Air samples ‘measured’ by a panel of selected human assessors
  - But olfactometry can only be used for determining odour emissions, not ambient concentrations
  - Direct measurements cannot usually be made at receptor locations – concentrations too low
    - (‘Electronic noses’ – improving technology but still not widely used)
- Useful at the planning and permitting stage of potentially odorous processes - the source is not yet present
- Can investigate possible mitigation measures – abatement, etc
HISTORY OF ODOUR REGULATION IN EUROPE
Odour regulation - history

• First odour regulations in Europe were in the 1970s
  – e.g. minimum setback distances for agriculture
• During the 1980s, countries in Europe began developing standards of olfactometry
• Some of the standards developed and published include:
  – France AFNOR X-43-101
  – Germany VDI 3881, Parts 1-4
  – Netherlands NVN 2820
Odour measurement, control, reduction measures and monitoring in the Baltic countries

Timeline – the Netherlands

Quantitative air quality guideline - industrial sources (based on **hourly averages and different percentile values**)

Minimum distance between residential housing and livestock (pigs)

1971

1984
## The Netherlands - 1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentile (hourly averages)</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Receptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>New installations</td>
<td>Residential, schools, hospitals, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>existing installations</td>
<td>Residential, schools, hospitals, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Isolated residential houses located on industrial estates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>Short duration, high impact emissions (e.g. loading/unloading)</td>
<td>Residential, schools, hospitals, etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Widely-applied
- Highlighted the need to have standard, reproducible measurements of odour
Timeline – the Netherlands

- **1971**
  - Minimum distance between residential housing and livestock (pigs)

- **1984**
  - Quantitative air quality guideline - industrial sources (based on hourly averages and different percentile values)

- **1995**
  - More flexible approach

- **2000**
  - 98th percentile of hourly averages – with different thresholds for different processes
Hourly mean approach: 98th percentile of hourly averages

- The odour threshold value can be exceeded 2% of the time (of the hours in a year)
- 2% of 8760 = 175 hours of exceedence
- Widely used in Europe
‘Odour hours’ approach

- Germany has air pollution control regulations: ‘Technical Instructions on Air Quality Control’
  - commonly known as the ‘TA Luft’

- Uses ‘odour hours’ approach - aims to take into account the short-term peaks in concentration (within the hour)

- ‘Odour hour’ definition:
  - Hours which have recognisable odour for at least 10% of the time (6 minutes)

- Odour assessment: the number of occurrences of ‘odour hours’ within a year
Current situation in Europe

- Most European countries tend to use the hourly mean (percentile) approach (e.g. Netherlands, France, Italy (regional), Ireland, UK)

- Some countries (e.g. Germany and Austria) use an ‘odour hour’ metric approach to try to account for short-term peaks
Why do some countries apply the ‘odour hour’ approach?

- Reflects the short-term peaks in odour concentrations
- Attempts to account for the ‘frequency’ aspect of the FIDOL framework
- Rapid response of human nose (few seconds)
Why do many countries apply the ‘hourly average’ approach?

- Simple concept
- Straightforward methodology
- Tried and tested
  - Many studies have found good correlation between the 98th percentile results and annoyance
  - The percentile approach has been used in many different practical situations such as planning applications
  - Has been the subject of many legal challenges – scrutiny
  - “Odour assessment methodology, as it has developed in Europe and UK over the last 35 years, has become well-established. The predictive, quantitative approach involves obtaining estimates of the odour source emission rate, use of the emissions in a dispersion model to predict 98th percentile concentrations at sensitive receptors and comparison of these with criteria that have evolved from research and survey work. At the present time, this remains an accepted technique and the IAQM supports this”

Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) odour guidance, 2014.
DISPERSION MODELLING OF ODOUR
Modelling: UK approach

• Various guidance and approaches for odour assessment
  – Different purposes (e.g. planning, permitting)
  – Different sectors (e.g. waste water treatment, composting)
  – Different regions within UK (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales)

• Examples of guidance:
    • https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/horizontal-guidance-environmental-permitting
  – Guidance produced in 2014 by a voluntary working group:
    • Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM)
    • Good overview of odour regulations, assessment and guidance
    • http://iaqm.co.uk/guidance/

• The 98th percentile of hourly average metric is consistent throughout
Modelling: UK approach

- 98th percentile of hourly average concentrations
- 175 exceedences allowed in a year

- Threshold values (ouE/m³):
  - 1.5 for most offensive odours
  - 3 for moderately offensive odours
  - 6 for less offensive odours

  (plus others – e.g. 5 in waste water industry)

  **Most** offensive: decaying animal remains, landfill, some waste water treatment processes

  **Moderately** offensive: intensive livestock, some food processing, composting

  **Less** offensive: Brewery, coffee roasting, bakery

"But how offensive is my source?"

"But what value?"

"But where do these threshold values apply?"
## Modelling: UK approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receptor sensitivity</th>
<th>Surrounding land where:</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Users can expect enjoyment of a high level of amenity Users present continuously/regularly for extended periods</td>
<td>Residential Hospitals Schools Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Users can expect reasonable enjoyment of a high level of amenity Users not present continuously/regularly for extended periods</td>
<td>Workplaces Commercial/retail Playing fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The enjoyment of amenity not reasonably expected Transient exposure</td>
<td>Industrial Farms Footpaths Roads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Modelling: UK approach - Combining FIDOL factors

- Example – UK guidance (IAQM):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Odour Exposure Level</th>
<th>Receptor Sensitivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( C_{98} ) (\mu g/m^3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥10</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–10</td>
<td>Substantial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–5</td>
<td>Substantial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5–3</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5–1.5</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;0.5</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When compiling this table, it has been assumed, on a conservative basis that the odour in question is at the offensive end of the spectrum.
Dispersion effects

- We can think of ‘dispersion’ in the atmosphere as being made up of two main processes: Advection and turbulent processes

  - ‘Advection’: the pollutant (odour) is transported along in the main direction of the wind
    - ‘external effects’ constant
    - Constant meteorological conditions

  - ‘diffusive’ processes: the pollutant (odour) is moved and mixed due to fluctuations in the wind, and chaotic smaller-scale movements of eddies
Spreading of pollutant plumes

- On timescales on less than around an hour, plumes will fluctuate and spread due to two main mechanisms:
  
  **a) Large-scale turbulence and changes in the direction of the wind**

  **b) Small-scale turbulence**
  - ‘Eddy diffusion’
  - On different scales
  - Generally small timescales
  - Timescales less than an hour
  - Prevailing wind conditions unchanged
"Turbulence: Is it possible to make a theoretical model to describe the statistics of a turbulent flow (in particular, its internal structures)?"
Concentration fluctuations and ‘odour hours’

• To calculate ‘odour hours’, need to determine the peak concentrations, which depend on the turbulence in the flow
• Turbulence and dispersion are best considered as random / stochastic phenomena
• This implies a statistical / probability approach
• Various methods for this:
  – Probability-based fluctuation ‘modules’ in Gaussian plume models
  – Lagrangian model (e.g. AUSTAL2000G in Germany)
  – Applying a fixed peak-to-mean factor to hourly mean values (e.g. Austrian Odour Dispersion Model (AODM))
    • $F = \frac{C_p}{C_m}$
Gaussian plume models

- Often misconceptions: “can’t model complex effects” (terrain, low wind speeds, coastlines, short-term concentrations)
- Detailed treatment of meteorological parameters
- *Advanced* Gaussian plume models – e.g. ADMS, AERMOD include refinements, such as:
  - Terrain effects
  - ‘Calms’ module: Accounts for the variable wind directions during low winds
  - Coastline module
  - Fluctuations module
Fluctuations module in ADMS

- An advanced module within ADMS
- Calculates the probability that a certain concentration will be exceeded
- Produces statistics of fluctuations in concentration
- The user specifies an averaging time (e.g. 6 minutes)
Lagrangian models

• Often called ‘random walk’ models
• The observer follows individual plume ‘particles’ or ‘puffs’ (parcels) as they move through the atmosphere
• Statistics of concentrations derived from trajectories of particles or puffs
Different modelling approaches - examples

Hourly mean

- Plume models
  - AERMOD
  - ADMS ('standard' operation)
  - AODM

Odour hour

- Plume models
  - ADMS (fluctuations module)
  - AUSTAL

Applies a peak-to-mean ratio

Percentile of hourly mean

Number of odour hours

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Modelling: UK approach – type of model

- IAQM guidance:
  - "In a recent survey in preparation for this guidance, members were asked which model they would select for an odour assessment"
  - "Odour assessments are almost exclusively undertaken in the UK using the AERMOD or ADMS models"

- Note: no prescribed model type
MEASURING ODOR
Odour measurements

• “Did you ever try to measure smell? Can you tell whether one smell is just twice as strong as another? Can you measure the difference between one kind of smell and another? It is very obvious that we have very many different kinds of smell, all the way from the odour of violets and roses up to asafoetida. But until you can measure their likeness and differences you can have no science of odour”

• Alexander Graham Bell - Inventor of the telephone - 1914
Assessing ambient concentrations

• Human nose is highly sensitive to odour – sensitive, fast and wide range
• Olfactometry is an important tool in odour assessment.
  – Collection of gaseous samples, followed by assessment by human assessors
• But is used for emission, not ambient concentrations
  – i.e. Used at the source, not at the receptor
  – (Are now some ambient olfactometry measurements - more later)
• CEN working group – European Committee for standardization
  – EN13725 standard introduced in 2003
• Many different approaches in Europe (and the world) until the introduction of the EN13725 standard
• Key elements of the EN13725 standard are the quality criteria for accuracy and precision (repeatability).
Ambient measurements: Future European standards

- A new European Standard is being drafted by the Technical Committee (CEN/TC 264/WG 27)
- Determination of odour in ambient air
- Selected and trained human panel members
- Two different methodologies of field inspection:
  - Grid measurement
  - Plume measurement

E.g: ‘The future European standard to determine odour in ambient air by using field inspection’ Guillot et al. Water Science and Technology.
CEN/TC 264/WG 27 – Grid method

• “The grid method is a statistical survey method which should be applied over a sufficiently long period of time (e.g. half a year or one year), to provide a representative map of the exposure of the population to recognisable odours.”

From: ‘The future European standard to determine odour in ambient air by using field inspection’ Guillot et al.
CEN/TC 264/WG 27 – plume method

• The plume method is used to determine the area in which the plume can be perceived under specific meteorological conditions.
• The odour plume extent is described by points where a transition from absence to presence of the odour under occurs.
• Results used to
  – determine a plausible extent of potential exposure to odours, or
  – to estimate the total emission rate using reverse dispersion modelling (useful where sampling at source is not practical)
Ambient odour measurements

• Field measurement techniques
  • “sniff tests”
• Use of the human nose as a sensor
  – With or without an instrument to help
  – ‘field olfactometers’
• Electronic noses
  – Devices
  – Arrays of sensors and pattern recognition
• More about this in later talks
AN EXAMPLE OF A NOVEL APPROACH TO ODOUR REGULATION
Crowd sourcing of odour episodes in Italy

- Q-Cumber - an innovative combination of crowd-sourcing, social networking and environmental tools, combining data from heterogeneous sources into a user-friendly query framework (developed by Algebra)

- QCumber combines
  - Crowd-sourced data on odour nuisance
  - Official data on possible sources of odour
  - Near-real-time official data (meteorology)
  - Modelling (ADMS)

- These can identify likely sources of odour nuisance
- Modelling can be used for odour source apportionment
Members of the public report odour problems.

People can comment: “The smell lasted a long time.”

People can click on a map and rate odour on scale (5 levels).
Data can be analysed

- number of alerts per day of week / per level
- number of alerts per hour of day / per level

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Odour contour plot

98th percentile
Today’s meeting

• Today’s program includes a wide variety of interesting presentations:
  – Experience of odour regulations, frameworks and control in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania
  – Odour regulations and monitoring techniques
  – Practical experience – six case studies
  – Opportunity for discussion – panel

Many thanks for your attention