

Causes of urban pollution

Cars:

One of the main causes of urban pollution is the increasing number of cars and other vehicles on the road. Exhaust emissions from these vehicles result in the production of the main green house gases carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate emissions. This not only damages the urban environment by polluting the air but is possibly a cause of respiratory diseases.



Traffic congestion

causes high levels of carbon emissions

Solutions:

There are a number of ways of limiting the number of vehicles and amount of emissions in urban areas. Encouraging public transport such as trams and tubes significantly reduces the number of vehicles on the road and so reduces congestion as well as pollution. The lower the congestion is in an urban area the lower the exhaust emissions are as much fuel is used up when stuck in slow moving traffic jams. Further ways to cut down on the number of vehicles on the road is to introduce something like the coloured number plate system used in Mexico City. These colour coded number plates prevent cars from going out on certain days of the week. Another way is to encourage cycling by setting up integrated cycle paths throughout an urban area so everything is easily accessible by bike. Also setting up bike racks outside places such as



shopping centers and bus stations as well as allowing bikes to be carried on buses for free could also help to encourage commuters to travel by bike and not car. These measures have been introduced in Glasgow and have proved to be very successful.

To encourage people to use more environmentally friendly cars taxes may be reduced on cars such as electrically powered ones or even increase the taxes of less environmentally friendly ones. However this option would be extremely unpopular.

Factories

Factories cause numerous problems such as atmospheric pollution due to high sulphur dioxide and other green house gas emissions. They can cause health problems in urban areas as pollutants and other by-products are released into water supplies. Many factories produce toxic waste products which aren't properly disposed of.

Solutions

By using cleaner, renewable fuels to run factories you can reduce the amount of green house gas emissions and air pollution. For example there are some types of coal which contain less sulphur than others. Using renewable fuels is also more environmentally friendly.

To prevent pollutants from being released into urban water supplies and causing health problems waste products need to be treated. Treating methods include adding chemicals to neutralize the product or through filtering processes. An alternative to treating waste products is to dispose them as environmentally friendly as possible. For example by burial or incineration, however these methods are not completely environmentally friendly and may cause other pollution.



Litter

One of the most common things in urban areas is high levels of litter. These not only cause visual pollution but also health problems as materials such as

plastics cannot be easily broken down resulting in a build up of dirt and attracting vermin.

Solutions

There are a number of ways to reduce the amount of litter in urban areas. The most obvious is improved waste disposal services which collect litter more frequently. There should be plenty of bins around an urban area so that no one has an excuse to litter. Another effective way to deter people from littering is introducing high littering charges which could range up to a thousand pounds which will make people think twice about casually littering.

Another way to help the clearance of litter is to increase community labor for punished people to help clear litter off the streets.



High levels of litter result in health problems