

# MIT

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MIT

## MIT to pay \$15k in fines, upgrade exhaust stacks after state finds air quality violations at utility plant

Posted by Matt Rocheleau October 4, 2013 11:18 AM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

MIT will pay \$15,000 in fines, make up upgrades to some of its exhaust stacks, and establish better training for employees who monitor emissions after state environmental officials said they found air quality violations at the campus' central utility plant.

Eric Worrall, acting regional director of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's Northeast Regional Office in Wilmington, said MIT failed to properly monitor air quality emissions at the plant, which he said was "unacceptable."

The alleged violations occurred during 2010 and 2011, but they were not discovered until after state officials reviewed reports MIT submitted in 2012 and inspected the institute's emergency generators and boilers, exhaust stacks, emission records and the utility plant, state officials said.

The plant, located on Vassar Street in Cambridge, houses boilers, a combustion turbine, and an emergency generator.

State officials said violations at the plant included: excess opacity, or visible emissions; excess carbon monoxide emissions; excessive downtime for systems at the plant that are meant to continuously monitor for carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides emissions; and excessive downtime for the plant's opacity analyzer.

Along with the fine, MIT will, by the end of 2013, upgrade the exhaust stacks cited by state officials.

Officials said the exact changes for each exhaust stack, which serve natural gas boilers and emergency diesel engine generators, will be determined through "ongoing evaluation."

But the modifications will include one or more of the following: increasing stack height; modifying the exhaust stack to vent vertically; removing existing rain caps on the exhaust stacks where appropriate; and installing active particulate matter filters on diesel engines where appropriate.

By the end of March, the institute will also either install an active particulate matter filter on one diesel generator or it will permanently remove the generator from service.

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And, MIT agreed with state officials to establish a plan within 60 days to implement a training program for all personnel who work with the emission and opacity monitory systems. The training program will include refresher training sessions at least twice a year.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at [mjrochele@gmail.com](mailto:mjrochele@gmail.com). Looking for more coverage of area colleges and universities? Go to our [Your Campus pages](#).

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Seems like extortion - \$15,000 fine?!

Why does it cost this much? Sure MIT has got it, but this sets a bad precedent for other companies in Cambridge that do not.

I mean OK, let someone know they have an emissions problem and give them a chance to fix it. This will cost most businesses enough coming into compliance.

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