

# Odour complaint checklist

## Complaint details

Address of complainant

Address of suspected source of complaint

Date of inspection

Time of inspection

Type of activity (e.g. craft brewery, restaurant, industry, agriculture)

Checklist completed by

ID	Item	Complete (Y, N, N/A)	Comment
1	Phone the complainant to confirm the details of the complaint (some discretion is warranted if it is late at night).		
2	Identify whether the pollution is likely to be from an ongoing problem source where the status is known and corrective action is in hand.  If so, call the complainant back to let them know this is the case.		

ID	Item	Complete (Y, N, N/A)	Comment
3	If the problem is new, or the complaint appears to add a new dimension to a known problem (e.g. 10 complaints received in 30 minutes about a problem that normally results in one complaint a month), then undertake a field investigation as soon as possible.		
4	Drive to the location of the complainant equipped with a map, camera, a torch (if at night) and identification/authorisation card or badge.		
5	Try to detect the odour in the general locality (the wind direction may have shifted since the complaint). Note the following for each observation:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>location of detection (map, coordinates)</li></ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>time of detection</li></ul>		

ID	Item	Complete (Y, N, N/A)	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>type of odour by description or identification (use odour wheel below)</li></ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>odour intensity (select one):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> obvious</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> subtle</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> no odour</li></ul></li></ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>odour presence (select one):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> constant</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> frequent/repetitive</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> transient</li></ul></li></ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>estimate of wind speed (select one):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> no wind</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> slight</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> moderate</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> strong</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> stormy</li></ul></li></ul>		

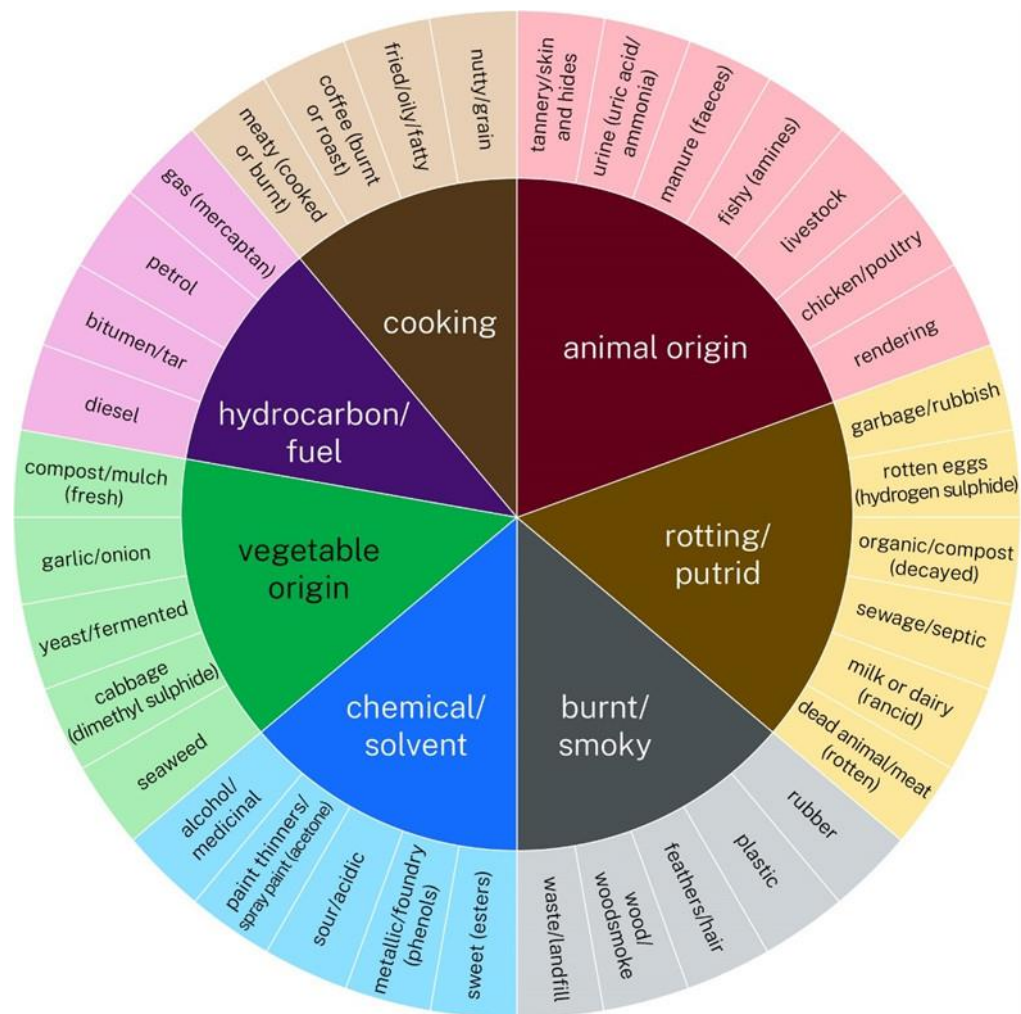
ID	Item	Complete (Y, N, N/A)	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• estimate of wind direction (select one):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> north</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> north north-east</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> north east</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> east north-east</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> east</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> east south-east</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> south east</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> south south-east</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> south</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> south south-west</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> south west</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> west south-west</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> west</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> west north-west</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> north west</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> north north-west</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
6	<p>Complete several traverses of the likely odour plume at different distances downwind from the suspected source. This can effectively confirm the direction of a plume.</p>		
7	<p>Travel to a position upwind of the suspected source and, using a traverse across the probable plume direction, establish that the odour is not present.</p> <p>If it is present, and the wind direction has not shifted, then the suspected source has been wrongly identified.</p>		

ID	Item	Complete (Y, N, N/A)	Comment
8	<p>Proceed to the suspected source and, if deemed necessary, seek to gain entry under the powers of an authorised officer.</p> <p>Make sure any council procedures and guidelines for inspections are followed.</p>		
9	<p>Identify yourself, indicate the legal authority and the nature of the investigation.</p> <p>Authorised officers' training provides guidance about the legal requirements here.</p> <p>It is an offence to hinder an authorised officer by refusing access while investigating such a situation, where it is reasonable to suspect the subject premises of being the cause of the odour.</p>		
10	<p>Identify the representative of the organisation and their authority, preferably the manager or supervisor on duty.</p> <p>Ask them the possible reason for the reported odours.</p> <p>Inspect the relevant parts of the process and equipment, as advised by the manager or supervisor, as well as any parts you suspect may be the cause of the problem.</p> <p>Things to investigate include:</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spills</li> </ul>		

ID	Item	Complete (Y, N, N/A)	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>accidents (e.g. drums dropped while handling)</li></ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>visible discharges from vents</li></ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>any visible evidence of deposition</li></ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>process problems or abnormal operations</li></ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>new materials or procedures</li></ul>		

ID	Item	Complete (Y, N, N/A)	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>large, exposed surfaces of odorous liquid, soil or other material</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>control equipment with monitoring/operating/maintenance records (e.g. scrubbers, adsorbers, fume incinerators).</li> </ul>		
12	<p>Advise the organisational representative to take corrective action and note their response.</p> <p>A local council authorised officer should ensure that any specific action required to be carried out by the organisation is in the form of a direction in a clean-up or prevention notice (e.g. issued under the POEO Act). If an officer gives a direction, they must have a statutory basis on which to do so.</p>		
13	<p>Advise that there will be a follow-up interview and discussion with the organisation’s management at an arranged time.</p>		
14	<p>Document actions according to council policy and procedure.</p>		

**Notes:** NA = not applicable; POEO Act = *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*.



**Odour wheel.** Source: Environment Protection Authority Victoria (2021)