



Otázka: Global issues

Jazyk: Angličtina

Přidal(a): dex

Our planet is plagued by environmental problems that deplete natural resources and strain livelihoods, many of which are exacerbated by poor industrial practices. If left unchecked, environmental problems negatively impact businesses both directly, as in supply chain disruptions, and indirectly, as in health hazards that lead to loss of man-hours and efficiency. Following are some common environmental problems that businesses need to address to ensure sustainability and long-term financial viability. Pollution is one of the world's biggest environmental problems, as it tends to be a typical byproduct of modern life. Air pollution, for instance, is the result of fossil fuel combustion, as well as various gases and toxins released by industries and factories.

Below are the most common air pollutants today, as well as a discussion of their source processes and effects on health:

- **Ozone** – A colorless, odorless gas generated when nitrogen oxides (found in motor vehicles and industrial machinery) and volatile organic compounds (found in gasoline, paints, inks and solvents) are exposed to sunlight. Inhaling ozone can trigger health problems including chest pain, cough, throat irritation and congestion, bronchitis, asthma and emphysema.
- **Carbon monoxide** – A poisonous gas produced by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels. When inhaled, carbon monoxide reduces the blood's oxygen-carrying capacity. Exposure to high levels of carbon monoxide can cause death. Aside from being highly toxic, carbon monoxide is colorless, odorless and tasteless, therefore often referred to as the "silent killer".
- **Nitrogen dioxide** – A highly reactive gas formed when fuel is burned at high

temperatures (such as in motor vehicle exhaust, electric utilities and industrial boilers). Nitrogen dioxide reacts with water and oxygen to make nitric acid, one of the main components of acid rain. Nitrogen dioxide can irritate the lungs and increase susceptibility to respiratory ailments.

- **Particulate matter** – Very small solid particles and liquid droplets suspended in the air. Short-term exposure to particulate matter can cause irritation to the eyes, nose and throat, as well as heart and lung ailments. Prolonged exposure can lead to hospital admissions and premature death due to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.
- **Lead** – A common ingredient in many manufactured products. Gasoline and paint are the major sources of lead emissions. Exposure to lead can cause kidney disease, nervous system disorders, mental retardation, learning disabilities, miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth and death.

As populations and industries grow, so does the problem of proper waste disposal. Communities accumulate so much garbage that properly disposing of it has become increasingly difficult. Solid garbage, for example, is usually buried in landfill sites or incinerated, which is extremely harmful to the environment. Decomposing garbage may attract vermin, give off a foul smell or leach into groundwater. The smoke given off by burning garbage contributes to air pollution. Shoreline erosion, coastal flooding and greater storm surges cause significant damage to coastal property and infrastructure. Cities, inhabited islands and tidal wetlands will be more prone to flooding. These can indirectly lead to business losses in the form of operational disruptions among suppliers, which in turn affect the rest of the supply chain and customers. In addition, floodwater can bring waterborne diseases that are harmful to people, plants and livestock. Environmental problems make it apparent that solving complex issues requires the cooperation of all sectors. Environmental issues affect every individual, organization, community and country, and by becoming environmental stewards, it keeps the economy moving, which is necessary for growth and long-term viability.