

About Air Quality



About the Mojave Desert's Air Quality

The Mojave Desert is known for its legendary clear blue skies and starry nights, and is not often associated with the characteristic smoggy haze which often envelops the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), which houses the highly polluted Los Angeles region and the San Bernardino Valley. The High Desert's proximity to SCAB and the prevailing southwest winds that transport pollutants from more congested urban areas south of the Cajon Pass into the region causes concern over ground-level ozone impacting ambient air. Violations of the federal ozone standard occur several times each summer, as do violations of the state standard for particulate matter (PM₁₀), usually in the fall and winter. In order to understand why we need to work to improve our air, we need to understand how air quality is determined.

Based upon the potential for health and economic effects, certain substances have been classified as pollutants by federal and state standards. Air monitoring is required to measure the amounts of these pollutants present in our air. When levels become elevated, our air is classified as polluted, and we are required to initiate efforts to clean it up.

In years past, air quality levels for both ozone and particulate matter measured within the MDAQMD's boundaries were much higher than they are now. Efforts by industry both outside and within the MDAQMD's boundaries and advancements in emission controls on vehicles and stationary pollution sources have lead to significant

improvements in local air quality. With even better emissions control, and continued help from businesses in both SCAB and in our own back yard, we will continue to work toward achieving state and federal air quality standards for the benefit of all residents living within MDAQMD's jurisdiction.

Current air quality conditions and forecasts

Want to learn more about the air quality in our area? View the current Air Quality Index for your location by clicking [here](#) to view our home page. Scroll to the middle of the page where you see the multicolored AQI bar labeled "Current Air Quality." Select the city closest to you on the drop down menu above the AQI color bar.

An air quality forecast is also available daily at noon for the following day via the home page and [here](#). You can view the air quality forecast for both today and tomorrow and use the Air Quality Map to see what the air quality in or near your city is.

You can also sign up to receive the air quality forecast delivered straight to your email, phone or Twitter account using [EnviroFlash](#).

Find out about current smoke and health advisories which have been issued by the MDAQMD and about how you can protect your health [here](#).

Learn more about the Air Quality Index (AQI) and its associated colors [here](#).

MDAQMD attainment status

On April 28, 2005, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) approved the nation's most protective ozone standard with special consideration for children's health. Based on air monitoring data, the MDAQMD is designated nonattainment for the new ozone standard. [More...](#)

Exceptional events

Exceptional events are unusual or naturally occurring events that can affect air quality but are not reasonably controllable using techniques that tribal, state or local air agencies may implement in order to attain and maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Exceptional events include wildfires, stratospheric ozone intrusions and volcanic and seismic activities. [More...](#)

Monitoring Info

Seven air monitoring stations are located at different sites around our District. At these monitoring stations, we collect information 24 hours per day, seven days per week, on the ambient levels of pollutants, including ozone (O₃), particulate matter (PM₁₀), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur oxides (SO_x), and carbon monoxide (CO). To find out which pollutants are monitored at each monitoring site location, look at our listing of [monitoring stations](#). [More...](#)

Pollution sources

We have many different sources of air pollution in our District. Sources range from large power plants to small household painting projects. By far the largest contributor of air pollution in our county is motor vehicles. [More...](#)

Air quality standards

Air quality standards are established to protect even the most sensitive individuals in our communities. These standards indicate the maximum amount of a pollutant that can be present in outdoor air without harm to the public's health. Both the California Air Resources Board (ARB) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) are authorized to set ambient air quality standards.

For information on the current air quality standards and area designation visit the California Air Resources Board [Air Quality Standards Site](#).

Air Quality and Health

The air we breathe has a direct correlation with our health. Among the population that is most negatively affected by poor air quality are children, elderly, and individuals with respiratory or cardiovascular health issues. There are several pollutants that are released into the air, and depending on the severity and chronic exposure, they could have lasting health impacts. [More...](#)

What You Can Do for Clean Air