



FACT SHEET

Public Complaint Program

About SDAPCD

The San Diego Air Pollution Control District (District) is a government agency that regulates stationary (non-motor vehicle) sources of air pollution within San Diego County to protect public health. The District's regulating and enforcement authority comes from state law and in certain cases, federal law. The District is the lead agency for industrial odor and dust complaints.

Odors, Health, and Toxicity

Many people are concerned about how offensive odors may affect their health, and whether the odor is toxic. An odor that is offensive is not necessarily toxic. Conversely, there are many substances such as phosgene or ethylene oxide that have sweet odors but are also toxic. Not everyone agrees on what type of odor is considered offensive. For example, cooking, baking, and coffee brewing odors are considered very pleasant but can become offensive in higher concentration or over a prolonged period. Offensive odors seldom cause long-term health effects, but they can cause nuisance or annoyance, and in some cases acute health effects.

What is the Nuisance Complaint Program?

The District will respond to a citizen's complaint concerning air pollution problems, such as smoke, odors, and dust from permitted and unpermitted operations. The District also responds to complaint referrals from other agencies such as the Air Resources Board, Environmental Protection Agency, fire department and, city and county agencies.

What is the Nuisance Law?

State and local regulations prohibit air pollution discharges which may cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons, or the public, or which cause or have the tendency to cause injury or damage to business or property. The public nuisance law does not apply to odors from agricultural operations in the growing of crops, or raising of fowls or animals, or to composting facilities.

How Do I Report an Air Quality Complaint?

Call the District at (858) 650-4550, with the source name (if known), location and nature of the complaint (odors, dust, smoke). District office staff will also ask for your name, address and phone number to contact you concerning the complaint investigation. District policy strictly prohibits the release of any information that would identify a complainant to an alleged source or to any other non-District personnel without your consent. Information about your complaint will be kept confidential, except where required in litigated matters. The Complaint line is also available in Spanish.

How are Air Quality Complaints Handled?

Once a formal complaint is received, it is assigned to an inspector and an investigation begins. The inspector records any observations reported by the complainant concerning the complaint, including frequency, time of day, duration, any property damage or ill health effects, description and type of odor, and other information that will assist in investigating the complaint.

The inspector will explain applicable regulations and procedures to the complainant. The inspector will investigate possible sources of the complaint. The inspector will take enforcement action if the source is not in compliance with the District rules and regulations. The inspector will inform the complainant of the investigation results.

In some cases, complaints concern problems for which the District has no jurisdiction over and air pollution problems are minor. Examples include naturally occurring air contaminants, neighborhood disputes, and local zoning code violations. Although the District may have limited or no enforcement authority in such cases, the District may refer the complaint to another agency. The Air Resources Board (ARB) has a statewide complaint hotline. The number to call with an air quality complaint is (800) 952-5582.

Interagency Complaint Referrals

The following is a list of referral agencies, listed by common complaint topics.

Accuracy of Fuel Dispensers

Agricultural Odors

Contact Department of Weights and Measures (858) 694-2778

Aircraft Emissions

Contact Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) (310) 725-3550

Animals

Contact Animal Control (619) 236-4250
 Dead Animal Removal (619) 492-5055
 Vector Control (Flies) (858) 338-2174

Automotive Repair Operations

Contact Bureau of Automotive Repair (800) 952-5210

Code Enforcement Violations

Contact City of Carlsbad (760) 438-1161
 City of Chula Vista (619) 691-5280
 City of Del Mar (760) 794-4610
 City of El Cajon (619) 441-1741
 City of Encinitas (760) 633-2683
 City of Escondido (760) 839-4650
 City of Imperial Beach (619) 628-1359
 City of La Mesa (619) 667-1177
 City of Lemon Grove (619) 685-7918
 City of National City (619) 336-4400
 City of Oceanside (760) 966-4800
 City of Poway (619) 679-4290
 City of San Diego (619) 236-5500
 City of San Marcos (760) 744-1050
 City of Santee (619) 258-4100
 City of Solana Beach (858) 481-2633
 City of Vista (760) 639-6141
 Unincorporated Areas (858) 565-5981

Consumer Products

Contact California Department of Consumer Affairs (800) 638-2772
 California Air Resources Board (ARB) (916) 322-2990

Diesel-Powered Vehicles

Contact California Air Resources Board (ARB) (800) 242-4450
 Mobile Sources Division (818) 575-6820

Dumping/Water Stagnation/Water Pollution/Sewer

Contact Regional Water Quality Control Board (619) 467-2952
 San Diego City of Public Works (Sewer Division) (619) 527-7400
 San Diego Metropolitan Industrial Wastewater Prgm. (619) 654-4100
 San Diego County Department of Public Works (619) 694-2212

Freon Recovery

Contact Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (800) 296-1996
 CFC Hotline (800) 296-1996

Gas Odors or Leaks

Contact San Diego Gas and Electric (800) 411-7343

Gutters or Storm Drains

Contact Stormwater Pollution (888) 846-0800
 (619) 338-2048

Hazardous Materials/Illegal Dumping or Spills

Contact Department of Environmental Health (619) 338-2222
 Hazardous Materials Management Division (619) 235-2111
 Household Hazardous Materials (619) 492-5055
 San Diego City Department of Environmental Service

Indoor Air Problems at a Place of Business

Contact CAL-OSHA (858) 637-5534

Indoor Air Problems at Other Locations (home, building etc-)

Contact *See yellow pages under Environmental and Ecological Services or Industrial Hygiene Consultants*

No-Smoking Regulations

Contact (619) 515-6693

Noise Pollution

Contact Department of Environmental Health (619) 338-2095
 Noise Pollution

Pesticides

Contact Department of Agriculture Enforcement Division (858) 694-2762

For Information about:

Vehicle Buyback Program (858) 595-5285