



# Air Quality Permits

## Who must get permits?

Facilities are required to obtain permits for any operations or equipment that emits or is capable of emitting air contaminants. Air contaminants can be dust, mists, fumes, vapors, odors or gases. Noise is not considered an air contaminant. A list of typical operations needing permits is included at the end of this fact sheet.

Some operations that are considered to have minimal emission potential have been exempted from permit requirements and are listed in District Rule 11. Exemptions should be verified by contacting the Air Pollution Control District.

*Operations and equipment are required to have District permits both prior to construction or installation and again before any operation begins.*

An “Authority to Construct” is issued to authorize construction or installation. A “Permit to Operate” is issued to authorize operation or use of the equipment. Permit modifications are required for:

- expansion
- relocation
- physical changes
- process changes
- ownership changes
- emission increases or decreases

## Why require permits?

Permits are the primary means for the District to assure that polluting operations are controlled to the maximum degree technically and economically feasible and do not interfere with the attainment and maintenance of healthful air quality. Permits are also necessary to ensure that businesses comply with air pollution control laws.

## How does a facility obtain a permit?

The process is started by submitting a completed application on approved forms with required fees to the District. Forms will be provided and fees estimated upon request.

## How long does it take?

Processing time depends upon the complexity and magnitude of the application. Simple applications can be processed in as little as 30 days, whereas complex operations may require several months from the time the application is deemed complete. District rules allow six months to process an application and provides for limited extensions of this time.

## How can I minimize permit costs?

Since the District evaluates a proposed project based on information supplied by the applicant, any information the applicant can provide to expedite the application process can reduce permit costs. The cost of processing an application is increased when the District must contact the applicant for additional information. Making sure your equipment is constructed and operating properly will also help to lower costs.

## What is the permit process?

Before any permit is issued, the District must determine what emission levels will be emitted from the proposed operation and compare these quantities with rules that limit emissions. The first permit to be issued is the “Authority to Construct”. This authorizes installation or construction but typically does not authorize operation.

Once installation is complete, the District should be contacted for an inspection. The equipment can then be operated with the District engineer present at the site. If any violation occurs during this inspection, the violation must be corrected immediately.

If the District engineer determines the equipment is installed in accordance with the “Authority to Construct” and the operation can be reasonably expected to comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, the District will issue a “Start-up Authorization”. This will allow operation during testing and/or until a final “Permit to Operate” is issued. Emissions testing may be required before a final permit is granted. The permitted equipment is then inspected periodically for compliance verification.

(more)

## How long is a permit valid?

An “Authority to Construct” is usually issued for a period of one year. Requests for extension may be done annually for up to five years. “Permits to Operate” are valid for one year and must be renewed annually.

## What happens if a facility doesn’t get a permit?

Construction, installation or operation of equipment without required permits may result in a penalty assessed for each day of violation.

## What if the operation or equipment is already installed and operating?

Any installation or operation prior to receiving the required permits is a violation of District rules and may be subject to compliance action such as a Notice of Violation and associated fines.

If it is necessary to operate equipment in violation, a petition may be submitted to the District’s Hearing Board for a variance. If granted, a variance allows legal operation of the equipment causing the violation while the violation is being corrected. For information on variances, call (858) 586-2650.

## Is there help available?

District staff are available to meet with permit applicants prior to submittal of permit applications to explain the required forms, processing procedures, applicable rules, and compliance inspections. This pre-application meeting is designed to help reduce permit review costs and to prevent time delay in permit issuance.

In addition, the District’s Small Business Assistance program helps small business owners understand air quality permit requirements and obtain the necessary permits. For assistance, call (858) 586-2656.

This fact sheet provides general information about air quality permits. For more specific information about permit requirements, contact the District at (858) 586-2600.

# Equipment Requiring Permits

*This list is not all-inclusive.  
For specific inquiries, call  
(858) 586-2600.*

## Chemical

- Acid Chemical Milling
- Bulk Dry Chemical Storage
- Detergent Spray Towers
- Dry Chemical Mixing
- Organic Evaporators, Dryers & Stillers
- Organic Gas Sterilizers
- Pharmaceutical Manufacturing

## Coatings & Surface Preparation

- Abrasive Blasting Equipment
- Coating & Painting (Booths & Open):
  - Auto Body
  - Aerospace
  - Can & Coil
  - Graphic Arts
  - Metal Parts
  - Paper Fabric
  - Ships & Boats
  - Wood Products
  - Other Industrial
- Paint, Stain & Ink Manufacturing
- Plasma Arc & Ceramic Deposition Spray Booths
- Solvent Application Operations

## Combustion

- Boilers & Heaters
- Burn Out Ovens
- Core Ovens
- Gas Turbines, Test Cells & Stands
- Incinerators & Crematories
- Non-Vehicular Piston Internal-Combustion Engines

## Electronics

- Electronic Component Manufacturing
- Hydro-squeegees
- Solder Levelers

## Food

- Bulk Flour & Powdered Sugar Storage
- Coffee Roasters
- Feed & Grain Mills & Kelp Processing
- Fish Canneries
- Smoke Houses

## Metals

- Chrome Plating
- Chromic Acid Anodizing
- Hot Dip Galvanizing
- Metal Melting Devices
- Oil Quenching & Salt Baths
- Precious Metals Refining
- Fuel Dispensing
- Gasoline & Alcohol Bulk Storage
- Gasoline & Alcohol Fuel Dispensing
- Intermediate Refuelers

## Rock and Mineral

- Brick Manufacturing
- Concrete Batch, CTB, Concrete Mixers & Silos
- Hot Asphalt Batch Plants
- Rock Drills
- Sand, Rock & Aggregate Plants

## Solvent Use

- Dry Cleaning
- Solvent & Extract Driers
- Vapor & Cold Degreasing

## Other

- Aqueous Waste Neutralization
- Asphalt Pavement Heaters
- Asphalt Roofing Kettles & Tankers
- Asphalt Pavement Grinders
- Brake Debonders
- Bulk Grain & Dry Chemical Transfer & Storage
- Ceramic Slip Casting
- Fiberglass Grinding
- Landfill Gas Flare or Recovery Systems
- Perlite Processing
- Reverse Osmosis Membrane Manufacturer
- Rubber Mixers
- Tire Buffers
- Waste Disposal & Reclamation Units