



Notices of Violation

What is a Notice of Violation?

A Notice of Violation is the Air Pollution Control District's claim that the District's rules or state air pollution laws have been violated. As provided in state law, a Notice of Violation may result in monetary penalties, civil suit, or in serious cases, criminal prosecution. ***Most violation settlements include some form of monetary penalty.***

What should I do if I receive a Notice of Violation?

First, take immediate corrective action to prevent the violation from continuing or recurring. Each additional day the violation is not corrected can be considered an additional violation.

After correcting the violation, advise the District in writing, within ten working days, of the action taken to correct the violation. A response does not preclude the possibility of further legal action. A penalty will most likely be assessed for each violation.

What should my written response to a Notice of Violation include?

Explain what specific actions you took to come into compliance, or the reasons you believe a violation did not occur. The written statement should include proof of compliance (e.g. a work order, repair receipts, application copies and proof of fees paid). A statement that merely says "we repaired all violations" or "we fixed it" is not enough information to show how the violation was corrected. The District needs to know the violation has ceased. This is very important because the law provides for additional penalties for each day of violation.

When the District or a court sets a penalty amount, the District or court will consider items such as the violation itself (extent of harm, its persistence and duration), the site's violation history, the innovative nature of the control equipment, and the actions the facility took to ensure compliance (extent of mitigation, response time, inspection and maintenance program, and financial burden). ***Make sure to address these items in the letter.***

What if I cannot fix the violation right away?

If, due to conditions beyond your reasonable control, you cannot correct the violation immediately and you must use the equipment or process that resulted in a Notice of Violation, you may seek a variance from the San Diego Air Pollution Control District Hearing Board. For information on how to apply for a variance, contact the District's Compliance Division at (858) 586-2650 or the Clerk of the Hearing Board at (619) 531-5434. Current forms may be downloaded from the District's website at www.sdapcd.org (follow the menus to Business Assistance/Compliance/Variance & Hearing Board).

What happens next?

Notices of Violation are handled in one of three ways:

- 1) **Violation Settlement Program** – The majority of cases are handled through the Violation Settlement Program. If a Notice of Violation is referred to this program, a letter is sent from the District offering to settle the violation rather than going to court. After considering factors such as the proof of correction, nature of the violation, violation history, and current compliance with the violated rule, the District sets the settlement terms and penalties. Maximum civil penalties established by the California

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Health and Safety Code range from \$1,000 to one million dollars per day of violation. It is important to respond to the letter you receive within the time indicated or the case may be referred to County Counsel for legal action.

- 2) **Civil action** – If the District does not receive a response to the violation settlement letter within the time indicated, or if the matter is not resolved through the Violation Settlement Program, it may be referred to County Counsel for a civil suit.
- 3) **Criminal prosecution** – A serious violation may result in criminal prosecution. This may result from either substantial pollution that could have been prevented or willful disregard of the District’s rules. In such cases, the District will refer the case to the local city attorney or district attorney’s office, or the U.S. Attorney’s Office. Depending on the seriousness of the violation, violators may be subject to a fine of up to one million dollars and up to one year in jail for each day of violation.

What about rule changes?

Rule changes can affect a regulated business, and it is the operator’s responsibility to know the current rules. The District holds at least one public workshop and one public hearing before any rule is changed.

In addition, the District attempts to notify affected businesses of a rule change by mailing “advisory” notifications. To help businesses keep current, the District also maintains a subscription list for those who wish to receive updated rules and regulations. Copies of current rules are available on the District web site at www.sdapcd.org under Rules and Regulations.

When a business receives a new or modified permit from the District, the business is responsible for complying with all the permit conditions. Regulated businesses must be familiar with all the permits required and permit conditions. For further information on permits, call (858) 586-2600.

Who can I call for more information?

This fact sheet provides general information about Notices of Violation. For more information or specific questions about a particular Notice of Violation, contact the District’s Compliance Division at (858) 586-2650.