



MEET YOUR LOCAL



Air District

This booklet provides an overview of the agencies that regulate air pollution, focusing on the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD). It explains the roles of different SDAPCD divisions, how to report air quality concerns, and ways to help improve air quality locally.

Who Regulates Air Pollution?

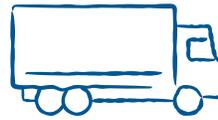
There are Multiple Types of Air Pollution.

This booklet will focus on two types:



Stationary sources

These don't move and can include factories, power plants, refineries, and gas stations.



Mobile sources

These are sources that move, like cars, trucks, lawnmowers, planes, and construction machines.

Federal level



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- Sets air quality standards for pollutants which are considered harmful to people and the environment
- Researches air pollution's impact on health and the environment
- Monitors mobile sources that cross state lines (e.g., trains, planes, ships)

State level



California Air Resources Board (CARB)

- Can enforce stricter air pollution standards than the federal government
- Researches pollution impacts and uses science to find solutions
- Regulates vehicles and fuels
- Monitors and regulates mobile sources within the state (e.g., cars, trucks, some ships)

Local level



San Diego County Air Pollution Control District

- One of 35 local air pollution control districts across California
- Oversees air quality planning, monitoring, and permits for stationary sources and areawide sources like consumer products
- Serves over 3 million people in San Diego County

Who is on the SDAPCD Governing Board?

San Diego County Air Pollution Control District's (SDAPCD) Governing Board provides guidance, sets policies, and approves plans to meet federal and state regulations. The board includes:



Two County Supervisors

one of whom represents San Diego County Air Pollution Control District on CARB



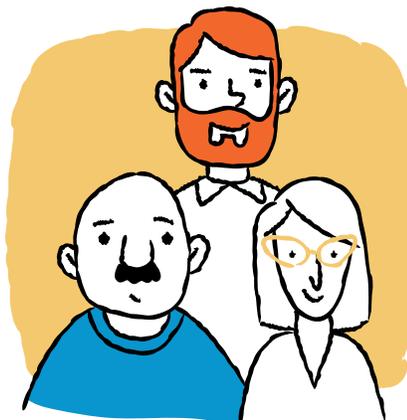
Five City Council Members

each being from a city within one of the five county supervisorial districts



A Mayor or City Council Member

from the City of San Diego



Three Public Members

including a public health expert, an environmental justice representative, and a technical expert on air pollution

What does SDAPCD do?

San Diego County Air Pollution Control District is organized into several divisions, each with different roles:



Engineering and Permits

Reviews permit applications from businesses that could emit pollutants, ensuring they meet regulations. They track pollution from these sources, manage the Air Toxics Hot Spots program (which informs the public about potential risks), and create strategies to reduce risks.

Grants & Incentives

Manages funding programs to encourage the transition to cleaner technology to reduce air pollution, mainly from mobile sources. They offer financial assistance to help businesses replace old, polluting equipment that use diesel engines with cleaner options, like zero (electric) or near zero emission trucks, off-road construction equipment, tractors, and school buses.



Business and Administrative Support Services

Supports operations through legal counsel, government and public relations, human resources, board administrative activities, fiscal management, accounting, and information technology, to name a few.

Monitoring and Technical Services

Maintains air quality monitors across the county, records air pollution data, and provides forecasts and advisories during events, like smoke from wildfires or high odors.



Office of Environmental Justice

Works with communities heavily affected by air pollution through outreach, the Community Air Protection Program, and Environmental Justice Partnership to co-develop and implement strategies to improve air quality. OEJ also supports Divisions at SDAPCD with guidance and resources for community engagement and integration of environmental justice principles and practices in operations and decision making.

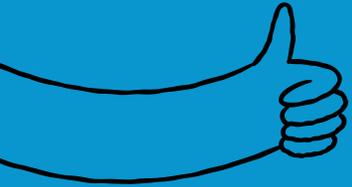
Planning and Rule Development

Develops air quality plans and works with other agencies to ensure clean air. They also create and update rules to reduce emissions, holding workshops to discuss new rules with the community.

Compliance

Ensures businesses follow permit conditions and regulations. Staff inspect both permitted and unpermitted sites and investigate community complaints. When violations are found, SDAPCD issues notices and may impose penalties. The division also offers training to help industries comply with rules.





Community Success Stories

Tijuana River Valley

In the summer of 2024, the combination of increased transboundary sewage flows and deficient wastewater treatment infrastructure created an environmental crisis affecting air, water, and soil quality in the Tijuana River Valley. This led to a significant increase in hydrogen sulfide gas and producing strong odors for residents of San Diego County's South Bay.

Over two summer months, the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) received over 2,000 complaints from residents.

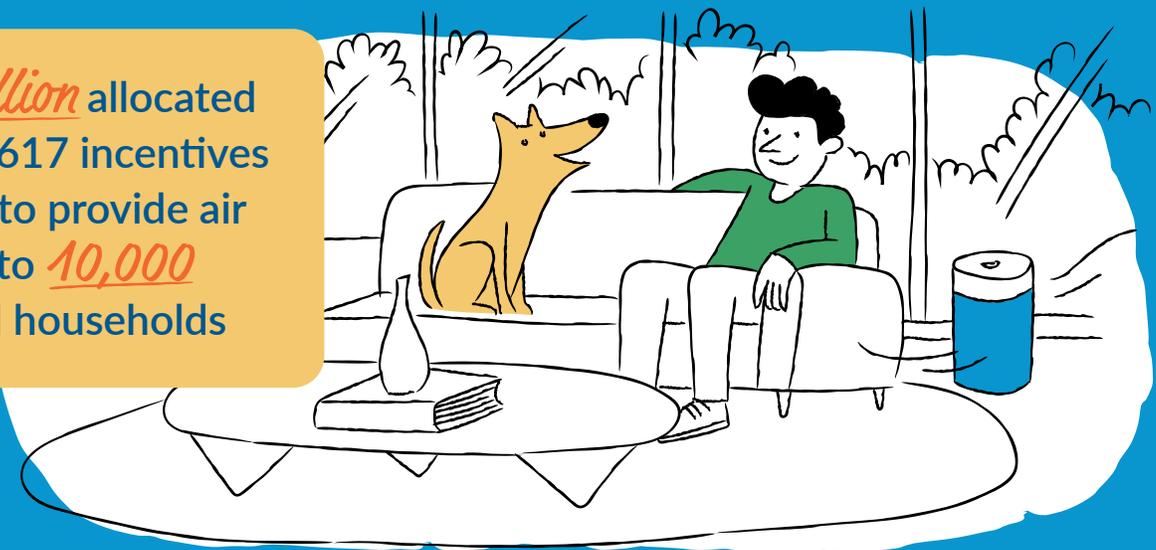
In response to this significant event and the hundreds of complaints from communities nearby, SDAPCD conducted frequent investigations and from its findings issued

multiple Notices of Violation (NOV) to the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) and its contractor alleging violations of causing a public nuisance from odors.

Additionally, SDAPCD increased its efforts to collect hydrogen sulfide data by deploying several reference-grade air monitors. These monitors will document trends and provide hourly hydrogen sulfide readings, giving the community important guidance on exposure levels.

Lastly, SDAPCD obtained approval from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to use \$2.7 million from the AB 617 incentives program to purchase and distribute air purifiers to 10,000 impacted households.

\$2.7 million allocated from AB 617 incentives program to provide air purifiers to *10,000* impacted households





Barrio Logan Community

After the COVID pandemic, a business that turns cooking oil from more than 3,000 restaurants in the region and processes it into low-carbon diesel fuel (also called biofuel) began to grow its operations in Barrio Logan. Community residents noticed that there were noxious smells generated from the process of producing biofuels. According to local reporting, “The smells got so bad that local residents said they had to hide in their homes with windows and doors tightly shut and that still was not enough to shut out the stench¹”

Community residents organized by a local community-based organization, Environmental Health Coalition, started to collect petitions requesting more to be done to reduce resident exposure to the odors and citing impacts to the adjacent residential community.

Between November 2021 and October 2023, residents submitted multiple air quality complaints to the SDAPCD. In response, SDAPCD conducted weekly complaint investigations and issued several public nuisance Notices of Violation. In 2022, SDAPCD filed a petition with the District Hearing Board for an abatement order, aiming to establish additional enforceable conditions to reduce odors impacting the Barrio Logan community. The petition was granted and required the facility to install and operate an odor control system, designed to mitigate the reported odors. Following the system’s installation, SDAPCD continued to investigate to ensure the system’s effectiveness. As a result, the District filed abatement order amendments to expand the scope, further enhancing odor reduction strategies. These actions led to significant operational changes and a noticeable reduction in odors in the community².

Actions to Take

Report Air Quality Concerns

You can report air quality concerns to San Diego County Air Pollution Control District anytime everyday of the week.



Email
apcdcomp@sdapcd.org



Phone
(858) 586-2650



Mobile App

Be sure to include the following details when reporting:

- Your name, address, and phone number.
- The time and date of the issue and whether it's ongoing.
- The type of issue (smoke, dust, odor, etc.).
- The source or operation causing the issue, if known.



Download the Mobile App

Use San Diego County Air Pollution Control District's free app to report concerns.

Download here or scan the QR code



Ways to Get Involved

You can get involved by participating in San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) workshops on rule development, budgets, and air quality planning. If there is an air quality issue in your community, encourage neighbors to report it through the app or by calling SDAPCD. Other participation ideas include:

- Engaging with public agencies and elected officials.
- Providing public comment at SDAPCD meetings.
- Posting on social media, talking to local media, or writing opinion pieces.

SDAPCD BOARD

Attend a Board Meeting

Participate in the decision-making process directly with the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District Board.

RULE DEVELOPMENT

Join Rule Development Workshops

Help shape rules to reduce pollution.

AIR QUALITY PLANNING

Participate in Air Quality Planning

Share ideas on reducing pollution (i.e., Regional Air Quality Strategy).

FINANCE

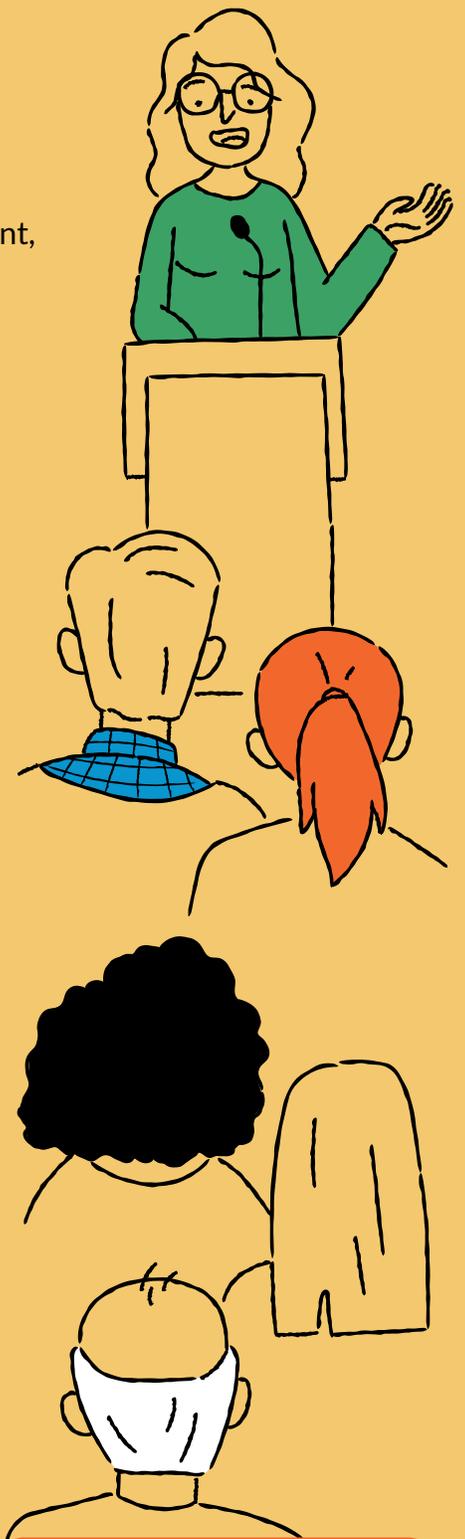
Influence Budget Priorities

Share your air quality priorities to help shape the budget and learn how funding is allocated.

COMMUNITY STEERING COMMITTEE

Join a Community Steering Committee

If you live in the Portside or International Border areas, join the Community Air Protection Program (AB 617).



For more info, visit:
www.sdapcd.org



Sign up for our email list for updates and follow us on social media.

Community Building



1. BUILD YOUR TEAM

- Create a list people and groups who can help. Include a mix of skills, ages, and backgrounds.
- Get to know team members and find common goals.
- Set regular meeting times and clear group expectations.
- Identify roles based on people's strengths, like research, notetaking, speaking, or organizing.



2. UNDERSTAND YOUR COMMUNITY

- Invite interested community members to join.
- Analyze your community's strengths, challenges, and opportunities.
- Who are the potential leaders and partners (i.e., elected officials, community leader, community organizations, etc.) inside and outside the community.
- Find ways residents can help advance advocacy efforts.



3. PLAN YOUR ADVOCACY

- Identify priority air quality issues in your community.
- Set a clear goal to improve air quality and community health.
- Identify what public agencies and elected officials have the jurisdiction and responsibility to address the issue.



4. SHARE INFORMATION

- Develop a system to keep everyone updated on the project's progress.
- Use communication methods that work best for your community, like flyers, phone calls, text messages, emails, social media, etc..
- Involve youth to maintain an active online presence.



5. DEVELOP AND ACT

- What actions will you take and how (i.e., give public testimony at a public meeting, protest, write an op-ed, get signatures from neighbors to sign a petition, etc.).
- Write an action plan with clear steps, timelines, and tasks.
- Ensure the plan has community support and visible results.
- Use community feedback to build your plan and include small milestones for quick wins.
- Celebrate successes and share progress regularly.



6. GROW LEADERS

- Highlight community members' skills and celebrate their work.
- Inspire others by showing real progress and teamwork.

Reference

This information is being adapted from the following source:

County of San Diego. (2016, August 18). *Resident Leadership Academy Participant Workbook*. Retrieved from Live Well San Diego: <https://www.livewellsd.org/home/showpublisheddocument/222/637957368583270000>

About

San Diego County Air Pollution Control District, Office of Environmental Justice

The San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) is the lead agency partner advancing the Environmental Justice Partnership.

SDAPCD is a local agency responsible for monitoring and regulating air quality in San Diego County. It oversees pollution from stationary sources such as factories, gas stations, and landfills.

The SDAPCD Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) partners with communities heavily impacted by air pollution to co-develop and implement strategies for improving air quality.



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