

Air Toxics "Hot Spots" Program – What You Need to Know

What is the Air Toxics "Hot Spots" Program?

This Program is intended to reduce potential health risks from stationary sources that create air emissions of toxic air contaminants. Stationary sources include manufacturing operations, power plants, and other industrial, commercial and governmental operations that can emit air pollution.

What are toxic air contaminants?

Chemicals in the air that can cause negative health effects if people are exposed to them. The effects can be mild and temporary such as headaches, eye or throat irritation or can be more serious and permanent such as cancer, birth defects or damage to organs, depending on the amount of time exposed and the type of pollutants.

How do we estimate health risks?

SDAPCD uses computer models and health-protective assumptions—not actual air measurements—to estimate health risks.

Types of health risks



Cancer risk: Chance of getting cancer from long-term exposure (30 years at home or 25 years at work). Expressed as chances per million.

Cancer burden: Estimated number of cancer cases in a community over a lifetime.

Non-cancer risk: Measured by a hazard index. A score of 1 or less means no expected health impacts.

How are risks reduced?

If health risks are elevated, sources must create a plan to reduce the risks. SDAPCD reviews and enforces these plans.

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