



air pollution control district
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Air Quality Awareness Week ***How is the Air Quality in Santa Barbara County?***

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, Calif. — For National Air Quality Awareness Week (May 3-7), Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) will provide information on our air quality.

To start the week off, APCD will highlight the status of air quality conditions in Santa Barbara County. All week, you can follow our social media ([@OurAirSBC](#) on Twitter and Instagram) for more resources.

Particulate Matter

One of the main pollutants of concern in our county is particulate matter, also known as PM. These fine particles can come from a complex mixture of liquids and solids, including the combustion of oil and gasoline as well as dust, smoke, ash, soot, and transportation sources. Particulate matter is recognized as either the larger PM₁₀ particles (diameter of 10 microns or less) or the ultra-fine PM_{2.5} particles (2.5 microns or less in diameter). Each PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} particle is so small that multiple particles linked together would line up across the diameter of a single strand of human hair. Santa Barbara County does not meet the California health-based standard for PM₁₀.

With wildfire season getting longer and more destructive, and smoke traveling farther, [concern about PM has increased](#). Even when our county is fortunate to not have wildfires occurring locally, we've seen sustained smoke impacts and elevated PM_{2.5} levels from wildfires occurring hundreds of miles away.

Ground-Level Ozone

Ground-level ozone, otherwise known as smog, forms in the atmosphere when emissions (from vehicles, the industrial and solvent sectors, and consumer products, among others) react with heat and sunlight. In Santa Barbara County, ground-level ozone concentrations have improved dramatically over time, even as the population has grown. This marked improvement has occurred thanks to the combined efforts of residents, businesses, government partners, and APCD Boards and advisory bodies, and as a result of voluntary actions as well as rules and regulations.

In December 2019, APCD was excited to share that the State had designated Santa Barbara County as attainment for the California ozone standard, a first-time achievement for our county and one not shared by many other counties. Unfortunately, in 2019 and 2020 during hot and stagnant conditions, higher ozone values were recorded at our air monitoring stations, which resulted in Santa Barbara County moving back into non-attainment status for the State ozone standard.



With that change in status, APCD will begin the triennial update of our Ozone Plan to identify local strategies that will assist our region in meeting the standard. APCD will also work with the State to ensure accompanying statewide measures are implemented to reach attainment of the standard.

Air Quality Monitoring Stations

APCD operates a robust network of monitoring stations throughout Santa Barbara County. The following locations measure for PM and/or ozone. Hourly, these stations measure the local air quality conditions, and this information is updated regularly to our website: www.OurAir.org/todays-air-quality.

- Santa Barbara
- Santa Maria
- Lompoc
- Goleta
- Santa Ynez
- Carpinteria
- Las Flores Canyon
- Paradise Road

In addition to our network of highly sophisticated monitoring stations, approximately 40 low-cost sensors have been deployed throughout Santa Barbara County. These sensors provide localized, neighborhood-specific air quality conditions to help people assess air quality trends. The data is refreshed every two minutes, and can be compared to the data gathered by the APCD monitoring network. U.S. EPA created a [map](#) that combines data from the APCD network and low-cost sensors to provide a broad picture of smoke impacts during wildfires.

What You Can Do

Both ozone and PM can affect lung health, and PM can also affect heart health. Those most at risk from air pollution exposure are seniors, children, pregnant women, and people with existing heart or lung conditions. To protect yourself, consider the following:

- Create a “clean air room” at home using a purchased HEPA purifier or a DIY version to keep indoor air quality healthy during wildfire smoke events: www.OurAir.org/clean-air-rooms/
- Know the current air quality conditions and forecasted conditions and use the Air Quality Index (AQI) to decide if it’s safe to be active outdoors: www.OurAir.org/todays-air-quality.
- Recognize the short-term symptoms of exposure to pollution, including coughing, throat irritation, chest tightness, wheezing, and shortness of breath, and contact your doctor if needed.

To help improve air quality, consider these actions:

- Use electric-powered landscaping equipment: www.OurAir.org/leefprogram/
- Limit the burning of wood in your fireplace or firepit.
- Find ways to drive less, whether it’s bicycling, walking, or combining trips and errands.
- When you do drive, make sure your car is tuned up and your tire pressure is maintained to maximize fuel economy.
 - If you’re looking for a new car, consider taking advantage of APCD’s Old Car Buy Back Program by trading in your 1997-or-older vehicle for \$1,000, which you can put toward a low- or zero-emission vehicle: www.OurAir.org/old-car-buy-back-program/ .
 - Automakers are offering electric, hybrid, and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles for sale and lease, and many entities and organizations offer rebates and incentives to help lower the price: www.electricdrive805.org/ .