



NEWS

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Air District tightens air toxics regulation

SAN FRANCISCO - The Bay Area Air Quality Management District has adopted regulatory amendments governing new sources of toxic air contaminants which will result in more stringent permitting requirements. As part of the amendments, the Air District will track all changes in emissions of toxic air contaminants in Bay Area communities most impacted by air pollution.

“These rule changes will provide an additional margin of public health protection for all residents of the Bay Area,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “While most air toxics have been substantially reduced in the Bay Area, some continue to pose serious health risks, especially in areas close to freeways and with particularly vulnerable populations.”

Amendments to the Air Toxics New Source Review regulation incorporate updated methodology more protective of infants and youth. The new methodologies were put forward by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. The revisions will result in increased stringency of permitting requirements for new and modified stationary sources of toxic air contaminants and are expected to make the program more stringent by a factor of two to three throughout the Bay Area. Gasoline dispensing facilities, diesel backup generators and crematories are expected to be the source categories most affected by these changes.

As part of the regulatory amendments, the Air District will develop a new tracking program for increases and reductions of toxic air emissions in Bay Area communities most impacted by air pollution. These areas were identified through the Community Air Risk Evaluation Program which analyzed neighborhoods with both high exposure to toxic air contaminants and populations particularly sensitive to adverse health effects of toxic air contaminants.

Toxic air contaminants are air pollutants which may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or serious illness, or which may pose a potential hazard to human health. The Air District’s Air Toxics Program is directed reducing emissions from stationary sources. Over the past two decades the Air District’s Air Toxics Program, along with other Air District and State programs, has reduced cancer risk from toxic air contaminants by approximately 70%.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area.

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