



NEWS

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Air District Board approves pioneering regulations on metal melting and metal recycling facilities

SAN FRANCISCO - Today the Air District's Board of Directors voted to approve two new rules that will further reduce particulate matter pollution and odors from foundries, forges and metal recycling facilities.

These rules are the end result of a thoroughgoing and extensive rule development process, beginning in 2011, in which the Air District hosted and participated in numerous meetings and held four workshops with industry, community groups, union members and other stakeholders.

"These rules are the first in California to address fugitive emissions from these kinds of metal-processing facilities," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "These rules strive to achieve a balance between improving air quality around these facilities and maintaining this industry's economic viability."

Regulation 12, Rule 13: Foundry and Forging Operations affects foundries, which melt and cast metals, and forges, which heat-treat metals. Regulation 6, Rule 4: Metal Recycling and Shredding Operations affects facilities that recycle metals, including those with shredders. Both of these rules address fugitive emissions of particulate matter and odorous substances through a requirement that facilities implement Emissions Minimization Plans. Emissions Minimization Plans are written documents that require a facility to show how they plan to reduce air quality emissions and odors. These plans must be approved by the Air District and revised and resubmitted every five years.

So-called "process" operations from sources at these kinds of facilities—such as metal melting furnaces, molds into which metal is poured, and auto shredders—are already highly controlled through a number of federal, state and local regulations. Emissions are typically vented through various types of pollution control equipment to a stack before they enter the atmosphere. Fugitive emissions are those that are not vented through a defined stack, and may enter the atmosphere through doors, windows, or open work areas.

Over a three-year rulemaking process, the Air District determined that the most effective way to further reduce emissions of PM and odorous substances from these types of industrial facilities would be to focus on these fugitive emissions that are not fully addressed by existing regulations and which comprise the largest portion of these facilities' overall emissions. The Air District also concluded that the best way to reduce those emissions is through the implementation of measures and procedures that are specific to the unique design and operation of each facility. This would be accomplished through the development of facility-specific Emissions Minimization Plans aimed at minimizing the fugitive emissions of these pollutants.

The Air District has engaged community groups, industry, and other stakeholders in an extensive public consultation process throughout the development of these regulations. The Air District estimates that these rules will reduce particulate matter emissions in the Bay Area by about 12 tons a year.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area.

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