



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

Compliance and Enforcement Division

INCIDENT REPORT

**PBF Energy Martinez Refining Company (MRC), Site # A0011
3485 Pacheco Blvd Martinez, CA
July 11, 2023**

On July 11, 2023, Air District staff responded to five complaints from Martinez alleging dust/fallout at their residences and on their cars. At the time of the release the wind direction was NW and 0-11 MPH. The alleged source of the fallout is believed to be the Martinez Refining Company (MRC). MRC stated that as part of a normal maintenance operation at their Delayed Coker Unit, coke dust became entrained in a steam plume that lasted for approximately 30 minutes.

The Delayed Coker unit receives heavy residual feedstock from the refinery vacuum unit. The objective of the Coker is to process the asphalt-like material to produce higher value products, such as gasoline, diesel fuel, LPG, and petroleum coke (coke). As part of this process, the coke accumulates in a coke drum. The drum is then steamed, vented, and cooled prior to the drum being opened to atmosphere. After the drum is opened, the petroleum coke is cut from the drum using high pressure water and is emptied into a holding pit.

MRC stated the Delayed Coker Unit (DCU) had previously been shut down for emergency maintenance. On and around 07/11/23, MRC successfully started up the unit and began normal operations. During the unit shutdown, water had accumulated in the coker pit and mixed with the current present coke. MRC stated during the early morning of 07/11/23, hot coke emptied into the pit and reacted with the accumulated water. This created a steam plume, which carried coke material offsite.

Air District staff communicated with Contra Costa County Health officials throughout the morning to coordinate complaint response efforts, public outreach, and sample collection. Air District staff took samples at the locations of the complaints received and from the potential sources in the refinery. These samples will be analyzed by an independent laboratory for fingerprinting.

A Notice of Violation was issued to MRC for Air District Regulation 1, Section 301, Public Nuisance. The Air District's investigation is ongoing and additional updates will be provided once more information is gathered.

