

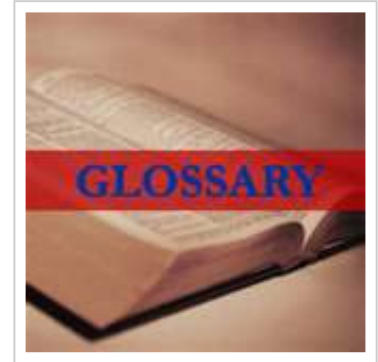
Glossary of Air Pollution Terms

This page last reviewed October 19, 2010

INTRODUCTION

This glossary provides definitions of terms pertaining to the laws, regulations, programs, and government agencies involved in assuring healthful air quality for California's citizens. Moreover, this glossary explains some of the scientific terms used to describe air pollutants, the processes that form them, and their effects on the environment and the population. The primary focus of this publication is to help interested citizens understand the most commonly used air pollution terms.

Please read an [overview](#) that describes what air pollution is and the regulatory system that has been developed to control it. See also our [Climate Change glossary](#) of terms.



Air Pollution Terms

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

A

AB 1807 (Tanner): A California state law (Health and Safety Code section 39650 et seq.) which became effective in January of 1984 and established the framework for California's [toxic air contaminant](#) identification and control program. For more information, please see our [toxics summary](#).

AB 2588 (Connelly) Air Toxics "Hot Spots" Information and Assessment Program: A California program (Health and Safety Code Section 44300 et seq.) which requires certain [stationary sources](#) to report the type and quantity of specific toxic substances they routinely release into the air. The program identifies high priority facilities and requires facilities posing significant risks to notify all exposed individuals. For more information, please go to our [AB2588](#) website.

AB 2766 (Sher) Motor Vehicle Fee Program: A program that permits [air district](#) and local governments to allocate vehicle registration surcharge fees to projects that reduce motor vehicle emissions such as [zero-emission vehicles](#), bike lanes, and trip reduction programs.

Abatement: The reduction or elimination of pollution.

Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI): The highest daily amount of a substance that may be consumed over a lifetime without adverse effects.

Acid Deposition: A comprehensive term for the various ways acidic compounds precipitate from the atmosphere and deposit onto surfaces. It can include: 1) wet deposition by means of acid rain, fog, and snow; and 2) dry deposition of acidic particles (aerosols).

Acid Rain: Rain which is especially acidic (pH <5.2). Principal components of acid rain typically include nitric and sulfuric acid. These may be formed by the combination of nitrogen and sulfur oxides with water vapor in the [atmosphere](#).

Acute Exposure: One or a series of short-term exposures generally lasting less than 24 hours.

Acute Health Effect: A health effect that occurs over a relatively short period of time (e.g., minutes or hours). The term is used to describe brief exposures and effects which appear promptly after [exposure](#).

Add-On Control Device: An air pollution control device such as carbon absorber or incinerator that reduces the pollution in exhaust gas. The control device usually does not affect the process being controlled and thus is "add-on" technology, as opposed to a scheme to control pollution through altering the basic process itself. See also [pollution prevention](#).

Adsorber: An emissions control device that removes [VOCs](#) from a gas stream as a result of the gas attaching (adsorbing) onto a solid matrix such as activated carbon.

Adverse Health Effect: A health effect from exposure to air contaminants that may range from relatively mild temporary conditions, such as eye or throat irritation, shortness of breath, or headaches to permanent and serious conditions, such as birth defects, cancer or damage to lungs, nerves, liver, heart, or other organs.

Aerosol: Particles of solid or liquid matter that can remain suspended in air from a few minutes to many months depending on the particle size and weight.

Afterburner: An air pollution abatement device that removes undesirable organic gases through incineration.

Agricultural Burning: The intentional use of fire for vegetation management in areas such as agricultural fields, orchards, rangelands, and forests. The regulation of agricultural burning is described in the Agricultural Burning Guidelines, Title 17, California Code of Regulations. For more information, please go to our [smoke management](#) program website.

Air: So called "pure" air is a mixture of gases containing about 78 percent nitrogen; 21 percent oxygen; less than 1 percent of [carbon dioxide](#), argon, and other gases; and varying amounts of water vapor. See also [ambient air](#).

Air Basin: A land area with generally similar meteorological and geographic conditions throughout. To the extent possible, air basin boundaries are defined along political boundary lines and include both the [source](#) and receptor areas. California is currently divided into 15 air basins.

Airborne Toxic Control Measure (ATCM): A control measure adopted by the ARB (Health and Safety Code Section 39666 et seq.), which reduces emissions of [toxic air contaminants](#). For more information please see our [ATCM](#) top page.

Air District: A political body responsible for managing air quality on a regional or county basis. California is currently divided into 35 air districts. (See also [air pollution control district](#) and [air quality management district](#)). For more information, see our [local air district directory](#).

Air Monitoring: Sampling for and measuring of pollutants present in the [atmosphere](#).

Air Pollutants: Amounts of foreign and/or natural substances occurring in the atmosphere that may result in adverse effects to humans, animals, vegetation, and/or materials. (See also [air pollution](#).)

Air Pollution: Degradation of air quality resulting from unwanted chemicals or other materials occurring in the air. (See also [air pollutants](#).)

Air Pollution Control District (APCD): A county agency with authority to regulate stationary, indirect, and [area sources](#) of air pollution (e.g., power plants, highway construction, and housing developments) within a given county, and governed by a district air pollution control board composed of the elected county supervisors. (See also [air quality management district](#)).

Air Quality Index (AQI): A numerical index used for reporting severity of air pollution levels to the public. It replaces the formerly used Pollutant Standards Index (PSI). Like the PSI, the AQI incorporates five criteria pollutants -- ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide -- into a single index. The new index also incorporates the 8-hour ozone standard and the 24-hour PM2.5 standard into the index calculation. AQI levels range from 0 (Good air quality) to 500 (Hazardous air quality). The higher the index, the higher the level of pollutants and the greater the likelihood of health effects. The AQI incorporates an additional index category -- unhealthy for sensitive groups -- that ranges from 101 to 150. In addition, the AQI comes with more detailed cautions. For more information, see our [air quality index](#) top page.

Air Quality Management District (AQMD): A group of counties or portions of counties, or an individual county specified in law with authority to regulate stationary, indirect, and area sources of air pollution within the region and governed by a regional air pollution control board comprised mostly of elected officials from within the region. (See also [air pollution control district](#)). For more information, please see our [local air district directory](#).

Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP): A plan prepared by an APCD / AQMD, for a county or region designated as a [nonattainment area](#), for the purpose of bringing the area into compliance with the requirements of the national and / or California [ambient air quality standards](#). AQMPs are incorporated into the [State Implementation Plan](#) (SIP).

Air Quality Manager: An individual employed by the local, state, or federal government to manage air quality.

Air Quality Simulation Model: A mathematical relationship between emissions and air quality which simulates on a computer the transport, dispersion, and transformation of compounds emitted into the air. For more information, please see our [software](#) webpage.

Air Quality Standard (AQS): The prescribed level of a pollutant in the outside air that should not be exceeded during a specific time period to protect public health. Established by both federal and state governments. (See also [ambient air quality standards](#).) For more information please see our [ambient air quality standards](#) webpage.

Air Quality Working Groups (AQWG): Advisory groups that provide forums for communication, cooperation, and coordination in the development and implementation of air quality control measures. They may be comprised of representatives from the ARB, citizen groups, environmental groups, industry, local air districts, and the U.S. EPA.

Air Resources Board: (See [California Air Resources Board](#).)

Airshed: A subset of [air basin](#), the term denotes a geographical area that shares the same air because of topography, meteorology, and climate.

Air Toxics: A generic term referring to a harmful chemical or group of chemicals in the air. Substances that are especially harmful to health, such as those considered under U.S. EPA's [hazardous air pollutant](#) program or California's [AB 1807](#) and / or [AB 2588](#) air toxics programs, are considered to be air toxics. Technically, any compound that is in the air and has the potential to produce adverse health effects is an air toxic. For more information, please visit our [toxics](#) website.

Alternative Fuels: Fuels such as methanol, ethanol, natural gas, and liquid petroleum gas that are cleaner burning and help to meet ARB's mobile and stationary [emission standards](#). These fuels may be used in place of less clean fuels for powering motor vehicles. For more information, please visit our [alternative fuels](#) website.

Ambient Air: The air occurring at a particular time and place outside of structures. Often used interchangeably with "outdoor air." (See also [air](#).)

Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS): Health- and welfare-based standards for outdoor air which identify the maximum acceptable average concentrations of air pollutants during a specified period of time. (See also [CAAQS](#) and [NAAQS](#) and [Criteria Air Pollutant](#).) For more information, please view our [ambient air quality standards](#) website.

American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM): A nonprofit organization that provides a forum for producers, consumers, and representatives of government and industry, to write laboratory test standards for materials, products, systems, and services. ASTM publishes standard test methods, specifications, practices, guides, classifications, and terminology. For more information, please visit the [ASTM](#) website.

Ammonia (NH₃): A pungent colorless gaseous compound of nitrogen and hydrogen that is very soluble in water and can easily be condensed into a liquid by cold and pressure. Ammonia reacts with NO_x to form ammonium nitrate -- a major PM_{2.5} component in the Western United States.

Area Sources: Those sources for which a methodology is used to estimate emissions. This can include area-wide, mobile and natural sources, and also groups of stationary sources (such as dry cleaners and gas stations). The [California Clean Air Act](#) requires [air districts](#) to include area sources in the development and implementation of the [AQMP](#). In the California emission inventory all sources which are not reported as individual point sources are included as area sources. The federal air toxics program defines a source that emits less than 10 tons per year of a single [hazardous air pollutant](#) (HAP) or 25 tons per year of all HAPs as an area source. For more information, please visit our [area-wide source methodologies](#) website.

Area-Wide Sources: Sources of pollution where the emissions are spread over a wide area, such as consumer products, fireplaces, road dust and farming operations. Area-wide sources do not include [mobile sources](#) or [stationary sources](#).

Aromatic: A type of [hydrocarbon](#), such as benzene or toluene. Some aromatics are toxic.

Asbestos: A mineral fiber that can pollute air or water and cause [cancer](#) or asbestosis when inhaled. The U.S. EPA has banned or severely restricted its use in manufacturing and construction and the ARB has imposed limits on the amount of asbestos in serpentine rock that is used for surfacing applications. For more information, please visit our website.

Asthma: A chronic inflammatory disorder of the lungs characterized by wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and cough.

Atmosphere: The gaseous mass or envelope of [air](#) surrounding the Earth. From ground-level up, the atmosphere is further subdivided into the [troposphere](#), stratosphere, mesosphere, and the thermosphere.

Attainment Area: A geographical area identified to have air quality as good as, or better than, the national and / or California [ambient air quality standards \(NAAQS / CAAQS\)](#). An area may be an attainment area for one pollutant and a nonattainment area for others. For more information, please visit our [area designations](#) website.

Authority to Construct (A/C): A pre-construction permit issued by an [air district](#).

B

Baghouse: An air pollution control device that traps [particulates](#) by forcing gas streams through large permeable bags usually made of glass fibers. For more information, please go to our [baghouse training](#) website.

Banking: A provision in [air district](#) permit regulations that allows a facility to accumulate credits for reducing emissions beyond regulatory limits (emission reduction credits) and then use or sell those credits at a later date. For more information, please go to our [New Source Review](#) website.

Best Available Control Measure (BACM): A term used to describe the "best" measures (according to U.S. EPA guidance) for controlling small or dispersed sources of [particulate matter](#) and other emissions from sources such as roadway dust, woodstoves, and open burning.

Best Available Control Technology (BACT): The most up-to-date methods, systems, techniques, and production processes available to achieve the greatest feasible emission reductions for given regulated air pollutants and processes. BACT is a requirement of NSR ([New Source Review](#)) and PSD ([Prevention of Significant Deterioration](#)). For more information, please go to our [BACT](#) website.

Best Available Retrofit Control Technology (BARCT): An air emission limitation that applies to existing sources and is based on the maximum degree of reduction achievable, taking into account environmental, energy, and economic impacts by each class or category of [source](#). (See also [Best Available Control Technology](#).) For more information, please go to our [BARCT](#) website.

Biogenic Source: Biological sources such as plants and animals that emit air pollutants such as [volatile organic compounds](#). Examples of biogenic sources include animal management operations, and oak and pine tree forests. (See also [natural sources](#).) For more information, please go to our [Ecosystems Impact](#) website.

Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR): An agency of the California Department of Consumer Affairs that manages the implementation of the motor vehicle [Inspection and Maintenance Program](#). For more information, please go to [the smogcheck](#) website.

Burn Day: A day that is not officially determined by meteorologists and [air quality managers](#) to be a no-burn day. Burn days vary by air basin on any given day. For more information, please view our [smoke management program](#) website.

C

California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA): A nonprofit association of the air pollution control officers from all 35 air quality agencies throughout California. CAPCOA was formed in 1975 to promote clean air and to provide a forum for sharing of knowledge, experience, and information among the air quality regulatory agencies around the state. CAPCOA is an organization of air quality professionals -- leaders in their field -- who promote unity and efficiency, and strive to encourage consistency in methods and practices of air pollution control. For more information, please go to [CAPCOA's](#) website.

California Air Resources Board (ARB): The State's lead air quality agency consisting of an eleven-member board appointed by the Governor and several hundred employees. CARB is responsible for attainment and maintenance of the state and federal [air quality standards](#), and is fully responsible for motor vehicle pollution control. It oversees county and regional air pollution management programs.

California Ambient Air Quality Standard (CAAQS): A legal limit that specifies the maximum level and time of exposure in the outdoor air for a given air pollutant and which is protective of human health and public welfare (Health and Safety Code section 39606b). CAAQSs are recommended by the California [Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment](#) and adopted

into regulation by the CARB. CAAQSs are the standards which must be met per the requirements of the California Clean Air Act (CCAA). For more information, please view our [AAQS](#) website.

California Clean Air Act (CCAA): A California law passed in 1988 which provides the basis for air quality planning and regulation independent of federal regulations. A major element of the Act is the requirement that local [air districts](#) in violation of the [CAAQS](#) must prepare attainment plans which identify air quality problems, causes, trends, and actions to be taken to attain and maintain California's air quality standards by the earliest practicable date.

California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA): A state government agency established in 1991 for unifying environmental activities related to public health protection in the State of California. There are six boards, departments, and offices under the organization of Cal/EPA including the [California Air Resources Board](#) (ARB), California Integrated Waste Management Board (IWMB), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and its nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB), Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), and [Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment](#) (OEHHA). To see links to these Cal/EPA organizations, go to the bottom of this webpage or any webpage on this website. The Cal/EPA boards, departments, and offices are directly responsible for implementing California environmental laws, or play a cooperative role with other regulatory agencies at regional, local, state, and federal levels. Please visit [Cal/EPA's home page](#).

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): A California law that sets forth a process for public agencies to make informed decisions on discretionary project approvals. The process aids decision makers to determine whether any environmental impacts are associated with a proposed project. It requires environmental impacts associated with a proposed project to be eliminated or reduced, and that air quality mitigation measures are implemented.

Cancer: A group of diseases characterized by uncontrolled invasive growth of body cells leading to the formation of malignant tumors that tend to grow rapidly and spread (*i.e.*, *metastasize*).

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂): A colorless, odorless gas that occurs naturally in the Earth's [atmosphere](#). Significant quantities are also emitted into the air by fossil fuel [combustion](#). (See also [ClimateChange.ca.gov Glossary](#).)

Carbon Monoxide (CO): A colorless, odorless gas resulting from the incomplete combustion of hydrocarbon fuels. CO interferes with the blood's ability to carry oxygen to the body's tissues and results in numerous [adverse health effects](#). Over 80 percent of the CO emitted in urban areas is contributed by motor vehicles. CO is a [criteria air pollutant](#).

Carcinogen: A cancer-causing substance. (See also [cancer](#).)

Carl Moyer Fund: A multi-million dollar incentive grant program designed to encourage reduction of emissions from heavy-duty engines. The grants cover the additional cost of cleaner technologies for on-road, off-road, marine, locomotive and agricultural pump engines, as well as forklifts and airport ground support equipment. Please visit our [Carl Moyer Program](#) website.

CAS Registry Number: The Chemical Abstracts Service Registry Number (CAS) is a numeric designation assigned by the American Chemical Society's Chemical Abstract Service and uniquely identifies a specific compound. This entry allows one to conclusively identify a material regardless of the name or naming system used.

Catalyst: A substance that can increase or decrease the rate of a chemical reaction between the other chemical species without being consumed in the process.

Catalytic Converter: A motor vehicle pollution control device designed to reduce emissions such as [oxides of nitrogen](#), [hydrocarbons](#), and [carbon monoxide](#). Catalytic converters have been required equipment on all new motor vehicles sold in California since 1979.

Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs): Any of a number of substances consisting of chlorine, fluorine, and carbon. CFCs are used for refrigeration, foam packaging, solvents, and propellants. Visit the [Cal/EPA website](#) for more information.

Chronic Exposure: Long-term exposure, usually lasting one year to a lifetime.

Chronic Health Effect: A health effect that occurs over a relatively long period of time (e.g., months or years). (See also [acute health effect](#).)

Cleaner-Burning Gasoline: Gasoline fuel that results in reduced emissions of [carbon monoxide](#), [nitrogen oxides](#), reactive organic gases, and particulate matter, in addition to toxic substances such as benzene and 1,3-butadiene. Visit our [cleaner-burning gasoline](#) website or an overview of [ARB's fuels program](#).

Climate Change: see [ClimateChange.ca.gov Glossary.](http://ClimateChange.ca.gov/Glossary/))

Coating: A layer of any substance such as paint, lacquer, or varnish applied over a surface for protection. For more information, please see our [coatings](#) website.

Coefficient of Haze (COH): A measurement of the quantity of dust and smoke in the [atmosphere](#) in a theoretical 1,000 linear feet of air. A COH of less than three is considered clean air and more than five is of some concern. COH readings of 20 or more can occur in urban areas.

Combustion: The act or instance of burning some type of fuel such as gasoline to produce energy. Combustion is typically the process that powers automobile engines and power plant generators.

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG): (See [alternative fuels.](#))

Conformity: A demonstration of whether a federally-supported activity is consistent with the [State Implementation Plan](#) (SIP) -- per Section 176 (c) of the [Clean Air Act](#). Transportation conformity refers to plans, programs, and projects approved or funded by the Federal Highway Administration or the Federal Transit Administration. General conformity refers to projects approved or funded by other federal agencies.

Congestion Management Program: A state-mandated program (California Government Code Section 65089a) that requires each county to prepare a plan to relieve congestion and reduce air pollution.

Consumer Products: Products such as hairspray, detergents, cleaning compounds, polishes, lawn and garden products, personal care products, and automotive specialty products which are part of our everyday lives and, through consumer use, may produce volatile organic air emissions which contribute to air pollution. Please view our [consumer products](#) website.

Continuous Emission Monitor (CEM): A type of air emission monitoring system installed to operate continuously inside of a smokestack or other emission source.

Continuous Sampling Device: An air analyzer that measures air quality components continuously. (See also [Integrated Sampling Device.](#))

Control Techniques Guidelines (CTG): Guidance documents issued by [U.S. EPA](#) that define reasonably available control technology (RACT) to be applied to existing facilities that emit excessive quantities of air pollutants; they contain information both on the economic and technological feasibility of available techniques.

Cost-Effectiveness: The cost of an emission control measure assessed in terms of dollars-per-pound, or dollars-per-ton, of air emissions reduced.

Criteria Air Pollutant: An air pollutant for which acceptable levels of exposure can be determined and for which an ambient air quality standard has been set. Examples include: [ozone](#), [carbon monoxide](#), [nitrogen dioxide](#), [sulfur dioxide](#), and [PM10](#) and [PM2.5](#). The term "criteria air pollutants" derives from the requirement that the [U.S. EPA](#) must describe the characteristics and potential health and welfare effects of these pollutants. The U.S. EPA and CARB periodically review new scientific data and may propose revisions to the standards as a result. View our [health and air pollution](#) website.

Cyclone: An air pollution control device that removes larger particles -- generally greater than one micron -- from an air stream through centrifugal force.

D

Deciview: A measurement of visibility. One deciview represents the minimal perceptible change in visibility to the human eye.

Degreaser: Equipment that removes grease, dirt, or unwanted materials from any part or product. Degreasers typically use aqueous or nonaqueous solvents, as liquid baths or condensing vapors, to remove such material.

Deposit Control Additives: Substances added to motor vehicle fuel to reduce and prevent deposits in the fuel delivery system and engine intake valves.

Design Value: The pollutant concentration used by [air quality managers](#) as the basis for determining [attainment](#) of an [air quality standard](#), generally by using an [air quality model](#). The design value may or may not be the same as the designation value.

Designation Value: The pollutant concentration used by [air quality managers](#) for designating [attainment](#) status of an [air district](#) with respect to the state and federal [ambient air quality standards](#). Generally, the designation value is the highest concentration that remains after excluding certain qualifying values. For a specific pollutant, the designation value for the state and federal standards may not be the same.

Diesel Engine: A type of internal combustion engine that uses low-volatility petroleum fuel and fuel injectors and initiates [combustion](#) using compression ignition (as opposed to spark ignition that is used with gasoline engines).

Dispersion Model: See [air quality simulation model](#) above.

Dose: The amount of a pollutant that is absorbed. A level of exposure which is a function of a pollutant's concentration, the length of time a subject is exposed, and the amount of the pollutant that is absorbed. The concentration of the pollutant and the length of time that the subject is exposed to that pollutant determine dose.

Dose-Response: The relationship between the dose of a pollutant and the response (or effect) it produces on a biological system.

Dust: Solid [particulate matter](#) that can become airborne.

E

Electric Vehicle: A motor vehicle that uses an electric motor as the basis of its operation. Such vehicles emit virtually no air pollutants. (See also [hybrid electric vehicle](#).) For more information, please see our [zero emission vehicles](#) website.

Electrostatic Precipitator (ESP): An air pollution control device that removes [particulate matter](#) from an air stream by imparting an electrical charge to the particles for mechanical collection at an electrode. For more information, please see our associated [training class](#) on this subject.

Emission Factor: For [stationary sources](#), the relationship between the amount of pollution produced and the amount of raw material processed or burned. For [mobile sources](#), the relationship between the amount of pollution produced and the number of vehicle miles traveled. By using the emission factor of a pollutant and specific data regarding quantities of materials used by a given source, it is possible to compute emissions for the source. This approach is used in preparing an emissions inventory. Please also look at [U.S. EPA emission factors](#), or ARB's [emission factors and toxic air contaminants](#),

Emission Inventory: An estimate of the amount of pollutants emitted into the [atmosphere](#) from major mobile, stationary, area-wide, and natural source categories over a specific period of time such as a day or a year. For more information, please view our [emissions inventory](#) website.

Emission Offsets (also known as Emissions Trading): A rule-making concept whereby approval of a new or modified stationary source of air pollution is conditional on the reduction of emissions from other existing stationary sources of air pollution. These reductions are required in addition to reductions required by [best available control technology](#). For information please go to our New Source Review [Emission Reduction Credit Offsets](#) website.

Emission Rate: The weight of a pollutant emitted per unit of time (e.g., tons / year).

Emission Standard: The maximum amount of a pollutant that is allowed to be discharged from a polluting source such as an automobile or smoke stack.

Energy Content: The amount of energy available for doing work. For example, the amount of energy in fuel available for powering a motor vehicle.

Environmental Justice: The fair treatment of people of all races and incomes with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Environmental Tobacco Smoke: Primarily a combination of sidestream smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe or cigar, and exhaled mainstream smoke from the smoker. Other components include smoke emitted at the mouthpiece during puff drawing. For more information, please see our [environmental tobacco smoke](#) website.

Epidemiology: The study of the occurrence and distribution of disease within a population.

Ethanol: Ethyl-alcohol, a [volatile](#) alcohol containing two carbon groups (CH₃CH₂OH). For fuel use, ethanol is produced by fermentation of corn or other plant products.

Evaporative Emissions: Emissions from evaporating gasoline, which can occur during vehicle refueling, vehicle operation, and even when the vehicle is parked. Evaporative emissions can account for two-thirds of the [hydrocarbon](#) emissions from gasoline-fueled vehicles on hot summer days.

Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR): An emission control method that involves recirculating exhaust gases from an engine back into the intake and combustion chambers. This lowers [combustion](#) temperatures and reduces NO_x. (See also [nitrogen oxides](#).)

Expected Peak Day Concentration (EPDC): A calculated value that represents the concentration expected to occur at a particular site once per year, on average. The calculation procedure uses measured data collected at the site during a three-year period. Measured concentrations that are higher than the EPDC are excluded from the state area designation process.

Exceedance: A measured level of an air pollutant higher than the national or state [ambient air quality standards](#). (See also [NAAQS](#) and [CAAQS](#).)

Exposure: The concentration of the pollutant in the air multiplied by the population exposed to that concentration over a specified time period.

Exposure Assessment: Measurement or estimation of the magnitude, frequency, duration and route of exposure to a substance for the populations of interest.

F

Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA): A federal law passed in 1970 and amended in 1974, 1977 and 1990 which forms the basis for the national air pollution control effort. Basic elements of the act include national [ambient air quality standards](#) for major air pollutants, mobile and stationary control measures, air toxics standards, acid rain control measures, and enforcement provisions. For more information, please go to the [Federal Clean Air Act](#).

Federal Implementation Plan (FIP): In the absence of an approved [State Implementation Plan](#) (SIP), a plan prepared by the [U.S. EPA](#) which provides measures that nonattainment areas must take to meet the requirements of the Federal Clean Air Act.

Flexible Fuel Vehicle (FFV): Vehicles that can use a combination of fuels such as alcohol fuel and unleaded gasoline.

Fly Ash: Air-borne solid particles that result from the burning of coal and other solid fuel.

Fossil Fuels: Fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas; so-called because they are the remains of ancient plant and animal life.

Fuel Cell: An electrochemical cell which captures the electrical energy of a chemical reaction between fuels such as liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen and converts it directly and continuously into the energy of a direct electrical current. For more information, please go to ARB's [fuel cell portal](#) page.

Fugitive Dust: Dust particles that are introduced into the air through certain activities such as soil cultivation, or vehicles operating on open fields or dirt roadways. A subset of fugitive emissions.

Fugitive Emissions: Emissions not caught by a capture system which are often due to equipment leaks, evaporative processes and windblown disturbances.

Fume: Solid particles under 1 micron in diameter formed as vapors condense, or as chemical reactions take place.

Furnace: A [combustion](#) chamber; an enclosed structure in which fuel is burned to heat air or material.

G

Gas Turbine: An engine that uses a compressor to draw air into the engine and compress it. Fuel is added to the air and combusted in a combustor. Hot combustion gases exiting the engine turn a turbine which also turns the compressor. The engine's power output can be delivered from the compressor or turbine side of the engine.

Gasoline Volatility: The evaporative properties of gasoline. Gasoline vapor is a [volatile organic compound](#). (See also [Reid Vapor Pressure](#).)

Global Warming: An increase in the temperature of the Earth's troposphere. Global warming has occurred in the past as a result of natural influences, but the term is most often used to refer to the warming predicted by computer models to occur as a result of increased emissions of greenhouse gases. For more information, please go to ARB's [climate change website](#) or Climate Change: see [ClimateChange.ca.gov Glossary](#).)

Greenhouse Effect: The warming effect of the Earth's atmosphere. Light energy from the sun which passes through the Earth's [atmosphere](#) is absorbed by the Earth's surface and re-radiated into the atmosphere as heat energy. The heat energy is then trapped by the atmosphere, creating a situation similar to that which occurs in a car with its windows rolled up. A number of scientists believe that the emission of [CO₂](#) and other gases into the atmosphere may increase the greenhouse effect and contribute to global warming. Climate Change: see [ClimateChange.ca.gov Glossary](#).)

Greenhouse Gases: Atmospheric gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, chlorofluorocarbons, nitrous oxide, ozone, and water vapor that slow the passage of re-radiated heat through the Earth's atmosphere. (See also [ClimateChange.ca.gov Glossary](#).)

Growth Management Plan: A plan for a given geographical region containing demographic projections (i.e., housing units, employment, and population) through some specified point in time, and which provides recommendations for local governments to better manage growth and reduce projected environmental impacts.

H

Hazardous Air Pollutant (HAP): An air pollutant listed under section 112 (b) of the federal Clean Air Act as particularly hazardous to health. Emission sources of hazardous air pollutants are identified by [U.S. EPA](#), and [emission standards](#) are set accordingly. For more information, please go our [Title III website](#) area.

Haze (Hazy): A phenomenon that results in reduced [visibility](#) due to the scattering of light caused by [aerosols](#). Haze is caused in large part by man-made air pollutants.

Health-Based Standard (Primary Standard): A dosage of air pollution scientifically determined to protect against human health effects such as asthma, emphysema, and cancer.

Health Risk Assessment (HRA): A document that identifies the risks and quantities of possible [adverse health effects](#) that may result from [exposure](#) to emissions of [toxic air contaminants](#). A health risk assessment cannot predict specific health effects; it only describes the increased possibility of adverse health effects based on the best scientific information available.

"Hot Spot": (See [toxic hot spot](#).)

Hybrid Electric Vehicle (HEV): Hybrid electric motor vehicles may operate using both electric and gasoline-powered motors. Emissions from hybrid electric motor vehicles are also substantially lower than conventionally powered motor vehicles. (See also [Electric Motor Vehicle](#).)

Hydrocarbons: Compounds containing various combinations of hydrogen and carbon atoms. They may be emitted into the air by natural sources (e.g., trees) and as a result of fossil and vegetative fuel combustion, fuel volatilization, and solvent use. Hydrocarbons are a major contributor to [smog](#). (See also [Reactive Organic Gases](#)).

Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S): A colorless, flammable, poisonous compound having a characteristic rotten-egg odor. It is used in industrial processes and may be emitted into the air.

I

Incremental Reactivity (IR): The additional [ozone](#) formed in the [atmosphere](#) with the incremental addition of a certain amount of a [volatile organic compound](#).

Incineration: The act of burning a material to ashes.

Indirect Source: Any facility, building, structure, or installation, or combination thereof, which generates or attracts mobile source activity that results in emissions of any pollutant (or precursor) for which there is a state ambient air quality standard. Examples of

indirect sources include employment sites, shopping centers, sports facilities, housing developments, airports, commercial and industrial development, and parking lots and garages.

Indirect Source Control Program: Rules, regulations, local ordinances and land use controls, and other regulatory strategies of air pollution control districts or local governments used to control or reduce emissions associated with new and existing indirect sources. Indirect source control programs include regulatory strategies such as transportation control measures (e.g., South Coast's Regulation XV for employer-based trip reduction); parking charges; land use controls that reduce the need for vehicle travel and increase transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access; and source-specific regulations such as truck idling and travel schedule requirements.

Indirect Source Review: A major component of an indirect source control program which applies to new and modified indirect sources. Strategies for indirect source review include permit programs, review and comment on new and modified indirect source projects through the [California Environmental Quality Act](#) (CEQA) process, and coordination of air quality, transportation and land use policies through local government general plans. Indirect source review reduces emissions from new and modified sources through best available mitigation measures and additional offsite mitigation such as offsets and mitigation fees.

Individual Cancer Risk: The probability, expressed as chances in a million, that a person experiencing 70 years of continuous area-wide outdoor exposure to a toxic air contaminant will develop cancer.

Indoor Air Pollution: Air pollutants that occur within buildings or other enclosed spaces, as opposed to those occurring in outdoor, or ambient air. Some examples of indoor air pollutants are nitrogen oxides, smoke, asbestos, formaldehyde, and carbon monoxide. For more information, please go to our [indoor air quality website](#).

Industrial Source: Any of a large number of sources -- such as manufacturing operations, oil and gas refineries, food processing plants, and energy generating facilities -- that emit substances into the [atmosphere](#).

Inert Gas: A gas that does not react with the substances coming in contact with it.

Inspection and Maintenance Program: A motor vehicle inspection program implemented by the California [Bureau of Automotive Repair](#). The purpose of the I&M is to reduce emissions by assuring that cars are running properly. It is designed to identify vehicles in need of maintenance and to assure the effectiveness of their emission control systems on a biennial basis. Enacted in 1979 and strengthened in 1990. (Also known as the "Smog Check" program.) For more information, please go to the [States main smogcheck website](#).

Integrated Sampling Device: An air sampling device that allows estimation of air quality components over a period of time through laboratory analysis of the sampler's medium. (See also [Continuous Sampling Device](#).)

Internal Combustion Engine: An engine in which both the heat energy and the ensuing mechanical energy are produced inside the engine. Includes gas turbines, spark ignition gas, and compression ignition diesel engines.

International Agency for Cancer (IARC): An expert international agency of the World Health Organization which publishes evaluations of evidence on the carcinogenicity of a wide range of chemicals. For more information, please go to the [IARC website](#).

Inversion: A layer of warm air in the atmosphere that prevents the rise of cooling air and traps pollutants beneath it.

L

Lead: A gray-white metal that is soft, malleable, ductile, and resistant to corrosion. Sources of lead resulting in concentrations in the air include industrial sources and crustal weathering of soils followed by fugitive dust emissions. Health effects from exposure to lead include brain and kidney damage and learning disabilities. Lead is the only substance which is currently listed as both a [criteria air pollutant](#) and a [toxic air contaminant](#).

Light-Duty Vehicle (LDV): Any motor vehicle with a gross vehicle weight of 6000 pounds or less.

Limit of Detection (LOD): The lowest concentration of a substance that can reliably measured.

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG): (See [Alternative Fuels](#).)

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG): (See [Alternative Fuels](#).)

Low Emission Vehicle (LEV): A vehicle that meets the ARB's low emission vehicle standards. For more information, please go to our [low emission vehicle website](#).

Low Emission Vehicle II (LEV II): California exhaust emission standards for 2004 and subsequent model passenger cars, light-duty trucks and medium-duty vehicles.

Lowest Achievable Emission Rate (LAER): Under the [Clean Air Act](#), the rate of emissions that reflects (1) the most stringent emission limitation in the [State Implementation Plan](#) of any state for a given source unless the owner or operator demonstrates such limitations are not achievable; or (2) the most stringent emissions limitation achieved in practice, whichever is more stringent.

Low NOx Burners: One of several [combustion](#) technologies used to reduce emissions of [nitrogen oxides](#).

Lubricity: A measure of the ability of an oil or other compound to lubricate (reduce friction) between two surfaces in contact.

M

Major Source: A stationary facility that emits a regulated pollutant in an amount exceeding the threshold level depending on the location of the facility and attainment with regard to air quality status. (See [Source](#).)

Maximum Achievable Control Technology (MACT): Federal emissions limitations based on the best demonstrated control technology or practices in similar sources to be applied to major sources emitting one or more federal [hazardous air pollutants](#). For more information, please see our [Title III website](#).

Maximum Incremental Reactivity (MIR): A measure of the increase in [ozone](#) formation per unit weight of a [hydrocarbon](#) when added to the [atmosphere](#).

Mean: Average.

Median: The middle value in a population distribution, above and below which lie an equal number of individual values; midpoint.

Melting Point: The temperature at which a solid becomes a liquid. At this temperature, the solid and the liquid have the same vapor pressure.

Mesosphere: The layer of the Earth's [atmosphere](#) above the [stratosphere](#) and below the [thermosphere](#). It is between 35 and 60 miles from the Earth.

Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE): An ether compound added to gasoline to provide oxygen and enhance complete [combustion](#). MTBE is being phased out of California's gasoline. For more information, please see our website that discusses [oxygenates](#).

Miscible: Capable of being mixed with other substances.

Mobile Sources: Sources of air pollution such as automobiles, motorcycles, trucks, off-road vehicles, boats, and airplanes. (See also [stationary sources](#)). For more information, please go to our [mobile sources portal](#) page.

Monitoring: The periodic or continuous sampling and analysis of air pollutants in ambient air or from individual pollution sources.

Motor Vehicle Fee Program: See [AB 2766](#).

Morbidity: Rate of disease incidence.

Mortality: Death rate.

Multimedia Exposure: Exposure to a toxic substance from multiple pathways such as air, water, soil, food, and breast milk.

Mutagenic: The ability of a chemical or physical agent to produce heritable changes in the DNA of living cells.

N

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS): Standards established by the United States EPA that apply for outdoor air throughout the country. There are two types of NAAQS. Primary standards set limits to protect public health and secondary standards set limits to protect public welfare. For more information, please go to our [AAQS](#) website.

National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAPS): Emissions standards set by the U.S. EPA for a hazardous air pollutant, such as benzene, which may cause an increase in deaths or in serious, irreversible, or incapacitating illness. For more information, please go to our [Title III](#) website.

Natural Sources: Non-manmade emission sources, including biological and geological sources, wildfires, and windblown dust.

New Source Performance Standards (NSPS): Uniform national EPA air emission standards that limit the amount of pollution allowed from new sources or from modified existing sources. For more information, please go to our [Title V](#) website.

New Source Review (NSR): A Clean Air Act requirement that State Implementation Plans must include a permit review, which applies to the construction and operation of new and modified stationary sources in [nonattainment areas](#), to ensure [attainment of national ambient air quality standards](#). The two major requirements of NSR are [Best Available Control Technology](#) and [Emission Offsets](#). For more information, please go to our [New Source Review](#) website.

Nitric Oxide (NO): Precursor of [ozone](#), NO₂, and nitrate; nitric oxide is usually emitted from [combustion](#) processes. Nitric oxide is converted to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in the [atmosphere](#), and then becomes involved in the photochemical processes and / or particulate formation. (See [Nitrogen Oxides](#).)

Nitrogen Oxides (Oxides of Nitrogen, NOx): A general term pertaining to compounds of nitric oxide (NO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and other oxides of nitrogen. Nitrogen oxides are typically created during [combustion](#) processes, and are major contributors to [smog](#) formation and [acid deposition](#). NO₂ is a [criteria air pollutant](#), and may result in numerous [adverse health effects](#).

Nonattainment Area: A geographic area identified by the [U.S. EPA](#) and / or [CARB](#) as not meeting either [NAAQS](#) or [CAAQS](#) standards for a given pollutant. For more information, please view our [designated areas](#) website.

Nonattainment Transitional: A subcategory of the nonattainment designation category for state standards that signals progress and implies the area is nearing attainment. Districts with nonattainment-transitional status may revise their attainment plans to delay adoption of control measures anticipating attainment without the measures.

Noncarcinogenic Effects: Non-cancer health effects which may include birth defects, organ damage, morbidity, and death.

Non-Industrial Source: Any of a large number of sources -- such as mobile, area-wide, indirect, and natural sources -- which emit substances into the [atmosphere](#).

Non-Methane Hydrocarbon (NMHC): The sum of all [hydrocarbon](#) air pollutants except methane. NMHCs are significant precursors to [ozone](#) formation.

Non-Methane Organic Gas (NMOG): The sum of non-methane hydrocarbons and other organic gases such as aldehydes, ketones and ethers.

Non-Point Sources: Diffuse pollution sources that are not recognized to have a single point of origin.

Non-Road Emissions: Pollutants emitted by a variety of non-road sources such as farm and construction equipment, gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment, and power boats and outboard motors. For more information, please see our [offroad](#) website.

No-Observed-Adverse-Effect-Level (NOAEL): A term used in risk assessment. An exposure level at which there are no statistically or biologically significant increases in the frequency or severity of adverse effects between an exposed population and a comparable non-exposed population.

No-Observed-Effect-Level (NOEL): A term used in risk assessment. An exposure level at which there are no statistically or biologically significant difference or severity of any effect between an exposed population and a comparable non-exposed population.

O

Octane Number: A numerical measure of the antiknock properties of gasoline used as a motor fuel. The higher the octane number, the greater the antiknock properties.

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA): A department within the California Environmental Protection Agency that is responsible for evaluating chemicals for adverse health impacts and establishing safe exposure levels. OEHHA also assists in performing health risk assessments and developing risk assessment procedures for air quality management purposes. Please visit [OEHHA's home page](#).

Olefin: A class of unsaturated [hydrocarbons](#) having the general formula C_nH_{2n} .

Onboard Diagnostics: Devices that are incorporated into the computer systems of new motor vehicles to monitor components and systems that affect emissions when malfunctioning. If a problem is detected, the OBD system illuminates a warning lamp on the vehicle instrument panel to alert the driver. This warning lamp typically contains the phrase Check Engine or Service Engine Soon. The system will also store important information about the detected malfunction so that a repair technician can accurately find and fix the problem. For more information, please go to our [on-board diagnostics](#) website.

Onboard Vapor Recovery: Devices placed on vehicles to capture gasoline vapor during refueling and then route the vapors to the engine when the vehicle is started so that they can be efficiently burned.

Opacity: The amount of light obscured by particle pollution in the [atmosphere](#). Opacity is used as an indicator of changes in performance of particulate control systems.

Organic Compounds: A large group of chemical compounds containing mainly carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, and oxygen. All living organisms are made up of organic compounds.

Oxidant: A substance that brings about oxidation in other substances. Oxidizing agents (oxidants) contain atoms that have suffered electron loss. In oxidizing other substances, these atoms gain electrons. [Ozone](#), which is a primary component of [smog](#), is an example of an oxidant.

Oxidation: The chemical reaction of a substance with oxygen or a reaction in which the atoms in an element lose electrons and its valence is correspondingly increased.

Oxygenate: An organic molecule that contains oxygen. Oxygenates are typically ethers and alcohols.

Ozone: A strong smelling, pale blue, reactive toxic chemical gas consisting of three oxygen atoms. It is a product of the photochemical process involving the sun's energy and [ozone precursors](#), such as [hydrocarbons](#) and [oxides of nitrogen](#). Ozone exists in the upper [atmosphere ozone layer](#) (stratospheric ozone) as well as at the Earth's surface in the troposphere (ozone). Ozone in the troposphere causes numerous [adverse health effects](#) and is a [criteria air pollutant](#). It is a major component of [smog](#).

Ozone Depletion: The reduction in the stratospheric ozone layer. Stratospheric ozone shields the Earth from ultraviolet radiation. The breakdown of certain chlorine and / or bromine-containing compounds that catalytically destroy ozone molecules in the stratosphere can cause a reduction in the ozone layer. For more information, please go to [U.S. EPA's website](#) on this subject.

Ozone-Forming Potential: (See [Reactivity](#).)

Ozone Layer: A layer of [ozone](#) in the lower portion of the [stratosphere](#) -- 12 to 15 miles above the Earth's surface -- which helps to filter out harmful ultraviolet rays from the sun. It may be contrasted with the ozone component of photochemical [smog](#) near the Earth's surface which is harmful.

Ozone Precursors: Chemicals such as non-methane [hydrocarbons](#) and [oxides of nitrogen](#), occurring either naturally or as a result of human activities, which contribute to the formation of [ozone](#), a major component of [smog](#).

P

Particulate Matter (PM): Any material, except pure water, that exists in the solid or liquid state in the [atmosphere](#). The size of particulate matter can vary from coarse, wind-blown dust particles to fine particle [combustion](#) products. For more information, please take a look at our [PM brochure](#).

Peak Levels: A level of airborne pollutants that is much higher than average. They can occur over a short period of minutes or hours in response to sudden releases, or they can occur due to a longer term build-up over several days.

Permit: Written authorization from a government agency (e.g., an [air quality management district](#)) that allows for the construction and / or operation of an emissions generating facility or its equipment within certain specified limits. For more information, please go to our [permitting activities](#) portal page.

Permit to Operate (P/O): An operational permit issued yearly by an [air district](#) to [sources](#) that meet specified regulations.

Peroxyacetyl Nitrate: A group of compounds formed from the photochemical reactions of nitrogen and organic compounds. PANs are components of smog and known to cause eye irritation.

Persistence: Refers to the length of time a compound stays in the [atmosphere](#), once introduced. A compound may persist for less than a second or indefinitely.

Personal Watercraft (PWC): Watercraft that do not have outboard, inboard, or stern drive engines. This encompasses the watercraft typically referred to as Jet Skis, Waverunners, etc. For more information, please check out our [recreational marine](#) website.

Photochemical Reaction: A term referring to chemical reactions brought about by the light energy of the sun. The reaction of [nitrogen oxides](#) with [hydrocarbons](#) in the presence of sunlight to form [ozone](#) is an example of a photochemical reaction.

Photolysis: Chemical decomposition induced by light or other energy.

Plume: A visible or measurable discharge of a contaminant from a given point of origin that can be measured according to the Ringelmann scale. (See [Ringelmann Chart](#).)

PM2.5: Includes tiny particles with an aerodynamic diameter less than or equal to a nominal 2.5 microns. This fraction of particulate matter penetrates most deeply into the lungs. For more information, please go to our [particulate matter](#) website.

PM10 (Particulate Matter): A criteria air pollutant consisting of small particles with an aerodynamic diameter less than or equal to a nominal 10 microns (about 1/7 the diameter of a single human hair). Their small size allows them to make their way to the air sacs deep within the lungs where they may be deposited and result in [adverse health effects](#). PM10 also causes [visibility](#) reduction. For more information, please view our [particulate matter brochure](#).

Point Sources: Specific points of origin where pollutants are emitted into the [atmosphere](#) such as factory smokestacks. (See also [Area-Wide Sources](#) and [Fugitive Emissions](#).)

Pollutant Standards Index (PSI): A numerical index formerly used for reporting severity of air pollution levels to the general public. The PSI incorporated the five criteria pollutants -- [ozone](#), [PM10](#), [carbon monoxide](#), [sulfur dioxide](#), and [nitrogen dioxide](#) -- into one single index. The PSI was based on the 1-hour ozone standard. PSI levels ranged from 0 (Good air quality) to 500 (Hazardous air quality). The higher the index, the higher the level of pollutants and the greater likelihood of health effects. For more information, see our website regarding the [Air Quality Index](#).

Pollution Prevention: The use of materials, processes, or practices to reduce, minimize, or eliminate the creation of pollutants or wastes. It includes practices that reduce the use of toxic or hazardous materials, energy, water, and/or other resources. For more information, please go to our [pollution prevention program](#) website.

Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs): Organic compounds which include only carbon and hydrogen with a fused ring structure containing at least two benzene (six-sided) rings. PAHs may also contain additional fused rings that are not six-sided. The combustion of organic substances is a common source of atmospheric PAHs.

Polymer: Natural or synthetic chemical compounds composed of up to millions of repeated linked units, each of a relatively light and simple molecule

Positive Crankcase Ventilation (PCV): An emission control system for a reciprocating internal combustion engine that involves recirculating gases that blow by the piston rings during combustion from the crankcase back into the intake manifold so they can be more completely burned.

Precipitator: Pollution control device that collects particles from an air stream. (See [Electrostatic Precipitator](#).)

Prescribed Burning: The planned application of fire to vegetation to achieve any specific objective on lands selected in advance of that application. In California, prescribed burning is governed under the Agricultural Burning Guidelines.

Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD): A permitting program for new and modified stationary sources of air pollution located in an area that attains or is unclassified for national ambient air quality standards ([NAAQS](#)). The PSD program is designed to ensure that air quality does not degrade beyond those air quality standards or beyond specified incremental amounts. The PSD permitting process requires new and modified facilities above a specified size threshold to be carefully reviewed prior to construction for air quality impacts. PSD also requires those facilities to apply [BACT](#) to minimize emissions of air pollutants. A public notification process is conducted prior to issuance of final PSD permits.

Primary Particles: Particles that are directly emitted from [combustion](#) and fugitive dust sources. (Compare with [Secondary Particle](#).)

Propellant: A gas with a high vapor pressure used to force formulations out of aerosol spray cans. Among the gases used are butanes, propanes and nitrogen.

Proposition 65: Safe Drinking and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, also known as Proposition 65. This Act is codified in California Health and Safety Code section 25249.5, et seq. No person in the course of doing business shall knowingly discharge or release a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity into water or into land where such chemical passes or probably will pass into any source of drinking water, without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual. For more information, please go to [OEHHA's Prop 65](#) website.

Public Workshop: A workshop held by a public agency for the purpose of informing the public and obtaining its input on the development of a regulatory action or control measure by that agency.

R

Radon: A colorless, naturally occurring, radioactive, inert gaseous element formed by radioactive decay of radium atoms in soil or rocks.

Reactive Organic Gas (ROG): A photochemically reactive chemical gas, composed of [non-methane hydrocarbons](#), that may contribute to the formation of [smog](#). Also sometimes referred to as [Non-Methane Organic Gases \(NMOGs\)](#). (See also [Volatile Organic Compounds](#) and [Hydrocarbons](#).)

Reactivity (or Hydrocarbon Photochemical Reactivity): A term used in the context of air quality management to describe a hydrocarbon's ability to react (participate in photochemical reactions) to form [ozone](#) in the [atmosphere](#). Different [hydrocarbons](#) react at different rates. The more reactive a hydrocarbon, the greater potential it has to form ozone.

Reasonably Available Control Measures (RACM): A broadly defined term referring to technologies and other measures that can be used to control pollution. They include Reasonably Available Control Technology and other measures. In the case of [PM10](#), RACM refers to approaches for controlling small or dispersed source categories such as road dust, woodstoves, and open burning.

Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT): Control techniques defined in [U.S. EPA](#) guidelines for limiting emissions from existing sources in [nonattainment areas](#). RACTs are adopted and implemented by states. For more information, please go to our [RACT](#) website.

Reasonably Available Retrofit Control Technology (RARCT): (See also [Best Available Control Technology](#).)

Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engine: An engine in which air and fuel are introduced into cylinders, compressed by pistons and ignited by a spark plug or by compression. Combustion in the cylinders pushes the pistons sequentially, transferring energy to the crankshaft, causing it to rotate.

Reference Dose (RfD): An estimate delivered by the [U.S. EPA](#) (with uncertainty spanning perhaps an order of magnitude) of the daily [exposure](#) to the human population, (including sensitive subpopulations) that is likely to be without deleterious effects during a lifetime. The RfD is reported in units of mg of substance/kg body weight / day for oral exposures.

Reference Exposure Concentration (RfC): An estimate, derived by the [U.S. EPA](#) with an uncertainty spanning perhaps an order of magnitude) of a daily [exposure](#) to the human population, (including sensitive subgroups) that is likely to be without appreciable risk of deleterious effects during a lifetime of exposure. The RfC is derived from a no or lowest observed adverse effect level from human or animal exposures, to which uncertainty or "safety" factors are applied.

Reference Exposure Level (REL): A term used in risk assessment. It is the concentration at or below which no adverse health effects are anticipated for a specified exposure period.

Reformulated Gasoline (RFG): Also called [Cleaner Burning Gasoline](#) (CBG). Gasoline with a different composition from conventional gasoline (e.g., lower [aromatics](#) content) that results in the production of lower levels of air pollutants. For more information, please go to our [cleaner burning gasoline](#) website.

Reformulated Gasoline Predictive Model: A set of mathematical equations that predict the emissions likely to occur from the [combustion](#) of a given formulation of gasoline. For more information, please go to our [predictive model](#) website area.

Regional Haze: The haze produced by a multitude of sources and activities which emit fine particles and their precursors across a broad geographic area. National regulations require states to develop plans to reduce the regional haze that impairs visibility in national parks and wilderness areas.

Reid Vapor Pressure: Refers to the vapor pressure of the fuel expressed in the nearest hundredth of a pound per square inch (psi) with a higher number reflecting more gasoline evaporation. (See also [Gasoline Volatility](#).)

Residual Risk: The quantity of health risk remaining after application of emission control.

Ringelmann Chart: A series of charts, numbered 0 to 5, that simulate various [smoke](#) densities by presenting different percentages of black. A Ringelmann No. 1 is equivalent to 20 percent black; a Ringelmann No. 5 is 100 percent black. They are used for measuring the [opacity](#) or equivalent obscuration of [smoke](#) arising from stacks and other [sources](#) by matching the actual effluent with the various numbers, or densities, indicated by the charts.

Risk Assessment: An evaluation of risk which estimates the relationship between exposure to a harmful substance and the likelihood that harm will result from that exposure.

Risk Management: An evaluation of the need for and feasibility of reducing risk. It includes consideration of magnitude of risk, available control technologies, and economic feasibility.

S

Sanctions: Actions taken against a state or local government by the federal government for failure to plan or to implement a [State Implementation Plan](#) (SIP). Examples include withholding of highway funds and a ban on construction of new [sources](#) of potential pollution.

Scientific Review Panel (SRP): Mandated by [AB 1807](#), this nine-member panel advises the [ARB](#), [OEHHA](#), and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation on the scientific adequacy of the risk assessment portion of reports issued by those three agencies in the process of identifying substances as [toxic air contaminants](#). For more information, please go to our [SRP](#) website.

Scrubber: An air pollution control device that uses a high energy liquid spray to remove [aerosol](#) and gaseous pollutants from an air stream. The gases are removed either by absorption or chemical reaction.

Secondary Particle: Particles that are formed in the atmosphere. Secondary particles are products of the chemical reactions between gases, such as nitrates, [sulfur oxides](#), ammonia, and organic products.

Sensitive Groups: Identifiable subsets of the general population that are at greater risk than the general population to the toxic effects of a specific air pollutant (e.g., infants, asthmatics, elderly).

Smog: A combination of smoke and other particulates, [ozone](#), [hydrocarbons](#), [nitrogen oxides](#), and other chemically reactive compounds which, under certain conditions of weather and sunlight, may result in a murky brown haze that causes [adverse health effects](#). The primary source of smog in California is motor vehicles.

Smog Check Program: (See [Inspection and Maintenance Program](#)).

Smoke: A form of air pollution consisting primarily of [particulate matter](#) (*i.e., particles released by combustion*). Other components of smoke include gaseous air pollutants such as [hydrocarbons](#), [oxides of nitrogen](#), and [carbon monoxide](#). Sources of smoke may include fossil fuel combustion, agricultural burning, and other combustion processes.

Solvent Base: [Hydrocarbon](#)- containing compounds such as paint thinner used for the purpose of thinning various types of [coatings](#) such as paint.

Soot: Very fine carbon particles that have a black appearance when emitted into the air.

Source: Any place or object from which air pollutants are released. Sources that are fixed in space are [stationary sources](#) and sources that move are [mobile sources](#).

Stakeholders: Citizens, environmentalists, businesses, and government representatives that have a stake or concern about how air quality is managed.

State Implementation Plan (SIP): A plan prepared by states and submitted to U.S. EPA describing how each area will attain and maintain national [ambient air quality standards](#). SIPs include the technical foundation for understanding the air quality (e.g., emission inventories and air quality monitoring), control measures and strategies, and enforcement mechanisms. (See also [AQMP](#)). For more information, please go to our [SIP](#) website.

Stationary Sources: Non-mobile sources such as power plants, refineries, and manufacturing facilities which emit air pollutants. (See also [mobile sources](#)).

Storage Tank: Any stationary container, reservoir, or tank, used for storage of liquids.

Stratosphere: The layer of the Earth's [atmosphere](#) above the [troposphere](#) and below the [mesosphere](#). It extends between 10 and 30 miles above the Earth's surface and contains the [ozone layer](#) in its lower portion. The stratospheric layer mixes relatively slowly; pollutants that enter it may remain for long periods of time.

Suggested Control Measure (SCM): A model rule developed by air quality managers for local [air districts](#) to use to control the emissions from certain [stationary sources](#) of air pollution.

Sulfates: (See [Sulfur Oxides](#).)

Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂): A strong smelling, colorless gas that is formed by the combustion of fossil fuels. Power plants, which may use coal or oil high in sulfur content, can be major sources of SO₂. SO₂ and other sulfur oxides contribute to the problem of acid deposition. SO₂ is a [criteria air pollutant](#).

Sulfur Oxides: Pungent, colorless gases (sulfates are solids) formed primarily by the [combustion](#) of sulfur-containing [fossil fuels](#), especially coal and oil. Considered major air pollutants, sulfur oxides may impact human health and damage vegetation.

T

Thermosphere: The outermost layer of the Earth's [atmosphere](#) extending from about 60 miles to several hundred miles. The temperature of this layer varies from many hundreds to thousands of degrees Celsius.

Title III: A section of the 1990 amendments to the federal [Clean Air Act](#) that addresses the control of toxic air emissions. For more information, please go to our [Title III](#) website.

Title V: A section of the 1990 amendments to the federal [Clean Air Act](#) that requires a federally enforceable operating permit for [major sources](#) of air pollution. For more information, please see our [Title V](#) website.

Topography: The configuration of a surface, especially the Earth's surface, including its relief and the position of its natural and man-made features.

Total Organic Gases (TOG): Gaseous organic compounds, including [reactive organic gases](#) and the relatively unreactive organic gases such as methane.

Total Suspended Particulate (TSP): Particles of solid or liquid matter -- such as soot, dust, aerosols, fumes, and mist -- up to approximately 30 microns in size.

Toxic Air Contaminant (TAC): An air pollutant, identified in regulation by the ARB, which may cause or contribute to an increase in deaths or in serious illness, or which may pose a present or potential hazard to human health. TACs are considered under a different regulatory process (California Health and Safety Code section 39650 et seq.) than pollutants subject to [CAAQS](#)s. Health

effects to TACs may occur at extremely low levels, and it is typically difficult to identify levels of exposure which do not produce adverse health effects. For more information, please view our [toxics](#) website.

Toxic Best Available Control Technology (T-BACT): The most effective emission limitation or control technique which (1) has been achieved in practice for such permit unit category or class of source; or (2) is any other emissions limitation or control technique, including process and equipment changes of basic and control equipment, found by the Executive Officer of the [California Air Resources Board](#) or Air Pollution Control Officer of the local districts to be technologically feasible for such class or category of sources, or for a specific source.

Toxic Hot Spot: A location where emissions from specific sources may expose individuals and population groups to elevated risks of [adverse health effects](#) -- including but not limited to cancer -- and contribute to the cumulative health risks of emissions from other sources in the area. For more information, please go to our [toxics hot spots](#) website.

Transfer Efficiency: For [coatings](#), a measure of the percent of the total amount of coating used which is transferred to a unit surface by a spray gun or other device.

Transportation Control Measure (TCM): Any control measure to reduce vehicle trips, vehicle use, vehicle miles traveled, vehicle idling, or traffic congestion for the purpose of reducing motor vehicle emissions. TCMs can include encouraging the use of carpools and mass transit.

Troposphere: The layer of the Earth's [atmosphere](#) nearest to the surface of the Earth. The troposphere extends outward about five miles at the poles and about 10 miles at the equator.

U

Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV): Vehicles that meet the ARB ultra-low emission standards. These emission limits are between those for LEVs and ZEVs. For more information, please view our [DriveClean](#) website.

Underground Storage Tank (UST): Refers to tanks used to store gasoline underground. For more information, please go to the [underground storage tank](#) website.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA): The federal agency charged with setting policy and guidelines, and carrying out legal mandates for the protection of national interests in environmental resources. For more information, please go to the [U.S. EPA](#) website.

Unit Risk Number: The number of potential excess cancer cases from a lifetime [exposure](#) to one microgram per cubic meter (μm^3) of a given substance. For example, a unit risk value of 5.5×10^{-6} would indicate an estimated 5.5 cancer cases per million people exposed to an average concentration of $1 \mu\text{m}^3$ of a specific carcinogen for 70 years.

Urban Airshed Model: A three-dimensional photochemical grid model designed to calculate the concentrations of both inert and chemically reactive pollutants in the [atmosphere](#). It simulates the physical and chemical processes that affect pollution concentrations.

V

Vapor: The gaseous phase of liquids or solids at atmospheric temperature and pressure.

Vapor Density: The vapor density is expressed in grams per liter (g / L) and is compared to the density of air (air=1).

Vapor Pressure: The pressure, often expressed in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg) or pounds per square inch (PSI), that is characteristic at any given temperatures of a vapor in equilibrium with its liquid or solid form.

Vapor Recovery Systems: Mechanical systems that collect and recover chemical vapors resulting from transfer of gasoline from operations such as tank-to-truck systems at refineries, tanker-to-pipeline systems at offshore oil operations, and pump-to-vehicle systems at gasoline stations. For more information, please go to our [vapor recovery](#) website.

Variance: Permission granted for a limited time (under stated conditions) for a person or company to operate outside the limits prescribed in a regulation.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT): The miles traveled by motor vehicles over a specified length of time (e.g., daily, monthly or yearly) or over a specified road or transportation corridor.

Viscosity: The degree to which a fluid resists flow under an applied force.

Visibility: A measurement of the ability to see and identify objects at different distances. Visibility reduction from air pollution is often due to the presence of sulfur and [nitrogen oxides](#), as well as [particulate matter](#).

Visibility Reducing Particles (VRP): Any particles in the [atmosphere](#) that obstruct the range of [visibility](#).

Volatile: Any substance that evaporates readily.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs): Carbon-containing compounds that evaporate into the air (with a few exceptions). VOCs contribute to the formation of [smog](#) and / or may themselves be toxic. VOCs often have an odor, and some examples include gasoline, alcohol, and the solvents used in paints.

W

Water Base: Water used as the solvent for coatings such a paint.

Water Solubility: The solubility of a substance in water provides information on the fate and transport in the environment. The higher the water solubility, the greater the tendency to remain dissolved and the less likely to volatilize from the water. Low water soluble substances will volatilize more readily in water and will partition to soil or bioconcentrate in aquatic organisms.

Weight of Evidence: The extent to which the available information supports the hypothesis that a substance causes an effect in humans. For example, factors which determine the weight-of-evidence that a chemical poses a hazard to humans include the number of tissue sites affected by the agent; the number of animal species, strains, sexes, relationship, statistical significance in the occurrence of the adverse effect in treated subjects compared to untreated controls; and the timing of the occurrence of adverse effect.

Welfare-Based Standard (Secondary Standard): An air quality standard that prevents, reduces, or minimizes injury to agricultural crops and livestock, damage to and the deterioration of property, and hazards to air and ground transportation.

Woodburning Pollution: Air pollution caused by woodburning stoves and fireplaces that emit [particulate matter](#), [carbon monoxide](#) and odorous and toxic substances. For more information, please see our [disposal of non-industrial wood waste](#) website.

Z

Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV): Vehicles which produce no emissions from the on-board source of power (e.g., an electric vehicle). For more information, please go to our [zero emission vehicles](#) program website.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This glossary represents the efforts of numerous groups and individuals. Various ARB staff members reviewed this material and provided valuable comments, and without their help this glossary would not have been possible. A special thanks goes to Jeff Lindberg, Aaron Philippi, and Erin Weaver who made substantial contributions to the development and final review of this document. Also, a special thanks goes to Gary Agid, Julie Billington, Edie Chang, Richard Corey, Bart E. Croes, Joe De Vita, Bob Fletcher, Rachel Kirlis, Bill Loscutoff, Cynthia Marvin, Linda Murchison, Marci Nystrom, Bill Oslund, Bruce Oulrey, Jon Pederson, Michael Poore, Mark Tavianini, Jon Taylor, Doug Thompson and Todd Wong, all of whom contributed to the development of the Air Quality Glossary.

This glossary has been reviewed by the staff of the California Air Resources Board and approved for publication. Approval does not signify that the contents necessarily reflect the views and policies of the ARB. Although the ARB has taken many steps to ensure that the information in this glossary is correct and up-to-date, readers should note that the codes are frequently amended, and the courts from time to time interpret their provisions. When necessary, readers should consult the official codes and handbooks or procure the services of an attorney. Copies of the California Codes can be found in each county's library and in law school libraries.

[Air Pollution and What You Can Do](#)