

FACT SHEET

Coachella Valley Extreme Area Plan for the 1997 8-hour Ozone Standard

Overview

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) establishes national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for different air pollutants. Areas that do not meet the NAAQS are called nonattainment areas. For ozone, there are multiple levels of nonattainment: marginal, moderate, serious, severe-15, severe-17, and extreme.
- The Coachella Valley attains the federal standards for one-hour ozone, particulate matter less than 2.5 microns, nitrogen dioxide (NO_x), carbon monoxide, lead, sulfur dioxide, but is in nonattainment for the following 8-hour ozone standards:

Federal Ozone Standard	Designation	Attainment Date
1997 8-hour Ozone (0.08 ppm)	Nonattainment (Extreme)	6/15/2024
2008 8-Hour Ozone (0.075 ppm)	Nonattainment (Severe-15)	7/20/2027
2015 8-Hour Ozone (0.070 ppm)	Nonattainment (Severe-15)	8/3/2033

- For the 1997 8-hour ozone standard, the Coachella Valley was originally classified as a “severe-15” nonattainment area with an attainment date of June 15, 2019.
- The ozone levels in the Coachella Valley have improved significantly over the last several decades, primarily because of emission reduction programs in the South Coast Air Basin (Basin). Since ozone is formed by chemical reactions in the atmosphere over the course of a day, ozone levels in Coachella Valley are almost entirely dependent on emissions from upwind in the Basin and not on emissions within Coachella Valley.
- Average values have declined from 0.108 ppm in 2003 to 0.089 ppm in 2019. However, due to higher temperatures and stagnant weather conditions, the Coachella Valley experienced unusually high ozone levels in 2017 and 2018. As a result, the Coachella Valley did not attain the original 1997 8-hour ozone standard by the attainment deadline of June 2019.
- Last year, South Coast AQMD submitted a request to the U.S. EPA to reclassify Coachella Valley from “severe” to “extreme” nonattainment, which was subsequently granted by the U.S. EPA. The new attainment date is June 15, 2024. This reclassification provides more time to attain the standard but results in stricter federal requirements on major stationary sources. We expect to attain the standard before the deadline based on continued implementation of these requirements and other existing rules.
- A revision to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) is needed to address the federal Clean Air Act requirements resulting from the reclassification of Coachella Valley to “extreme” nonattainment.

Proposed Coachella Valley Extreme Area Plan for the 1997 8-hour Ozone Standard (Extreme Area Plan)

- The Extreme Area Plan is currently under development and it will include the following key elements:
 - Updated emissions inventory (baseline and forecast)
 - Evaluation of strategies and emission reductions needed for attainment demonstration
 - Lowering the emission limit for major stationary sources (for permitting requirements) from 25 to 10 tons per year of NO_x and volatile organic compounds (VOC)
 - Contingency measures to ensure progress in reducing emissions and attaining the standard
- Based on the updated emissions inventory and air quality modeling, the Coachella Valley is expected to achieve the 1997 8-hour ozone standard before the attainment date through continued implementation of existing rules and regulations.

Proposed Schedule and Public Process

- AB 617 Community Steering Committee – Aug 26, 2020
- AQMP Advisory Group – Sep 3, 2020
- South Coast AQMD Mobile Source Committee – Sep 18, 2020
- Public Consultation Meeting – Sep 25, 2020 (with draft Extreme Area Plan available on internet: [http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan/other-state-implementation-plan-\(sip\)-revisions](http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan/other-state-implementation-plan-(sip)-revisions))
- South Coast AQMD Mobile Source Committee – Nov 20, 2020
- South Coast AQMD Governing Board – Dec 4, 2020

More Information

For more information on the Coachella Valley Extreme Area Plan for the 1997 8-hour ozone standard, please contact Dr. Kalam Cheung at (909) 396-3281 or kcheung@aqmd.gov, or visit [http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan/other-state-implementation-plan-\(sip\)-revisions](http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan/other-state-implementation-plan-(sip)-revisions)