



# Request for Reclassification for Ozone in Coachella Valley

SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT



## F A C T S H E E T

### Overview

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) establishes health-based national standards for different air pollutants. Areas that meet the federal standards are said to be in attainment; those that do not meet the federal standards are nonattainment areas.

The Coachella Valley has attained federal standards for one-hour average ozone, fine particulates (PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), carbon monoxide (CO), lead, and sulfur dioxide (SO2), but is in nonattainment with the following 8-hour average ozone standards:

Federal Ozone Standard	Designation	Deadline to Reach Standard
1997 8-hour Ozone (0.08 ppm)	Severe Nonattainment	6/15/2019
2008 8-Hour Ozone (0.075 ppm)	Severe Nonattainment	7/20/2027
2015 8-Hour Ozone (0.070 ppm)	Severe Nonattainment	8/03/2033

The Coachella Valley is currently classified as Severe nonattainment for the 1997 8-hour ozone standard and is required to demonstrate attainment by June 15, 2019. Based on recent air quality measurements, Coachella Valley will not be able to meet the 2019 deadline and the South Coast AQMD plans to seek a reclassification that will extend the attainment deadline to June 2024.

### Why the 1997 8-Hour Ozone Standard Cannot be Met by June 2019?

Ozone pollution has improved in Coachella Valley over the last several decades. Due to South Coast AQMD's stationary and mobile source emission reduction programs both in the South Coast Air Basin and in Coachella Valley, ground level ozone in the valley has decreased from 0.108 ppm in 2003 to 0.087 ppm in 2016. In the past two years, unusual weather patterns that favor the formation of ozone, such as higher temperatures and an increase of stagnant weather conditions, have resulted in higher levels of ozone statewide and across the western United States. Because of that, Coachella Valley saw an increase in ozone levels in 2017 and 2018.

It is important to note that ozone pollution in Coachella Valley is directly related to pollutants transported from the South Coast Air Basin, which is upwind of the Coachella Valley. The local sources of air pollution in Coachella Valley have limited impact on ozone levels in the Coachella Valley.

### What Happens When the Standards are not Met?

When a Severe nonattainment area is unable to attain the standard by its deadline, the federal law known as the Clean Air Act allows these areas to request that the U.S. EPA reclassify the area to a higher nonattainment status of Extreme.

The higher classification of Coachella Valley would provide more time to meet the standard, with a new deadline of June 15, 2024. It will also result in the following additional requirements:

1. Lowering the emission limit for major stationary sources which could mean additional permitting requirements for new and existing facilities under South Coast AQMD programs known as Title V and New Source Review and,
2. Require South Coast AQMD to develop a new State Implementation Plan (SIP) to show how the area will meet the standard on or before June 15, 2024.

If the South Coast AQMD does not request reclassification for the Coachella Valley, the U.S. EPA will make a finding of failure to attain, which will require major stationary source facilities to pay a nonattainment fee in addition to the requirements mentioned above.

## Will We Meet the Standard Under the New Deadline?

Future emission reductions anticipated to occur in the South Coast Air Basin associated with current and planned regulations on mobile and stationary sources are expected to contribute to improvements in ozone air quality in the Coachella Valley and lead to attainment of the standard. Although our projections show that we should be able to meet the standard by 2024, unpredictable year-to-year variables such as higher temperatures and potential wildfires can contribute to higher ozone levels. South Coast AQMD is working on a study to evaluate the meteorological trends contributing to recent poor air quality in the South Coast Air Basin. The results from the study are expected to shed more light on the uncertainties associated with a changing climate and its impact on air quality.

## Next Steps

South Coast AQMD staff is recommending a formal request to U.S. EPA for a voluntary reclassification of the Coachella Valley to an Extreme nonattainment area. The South Coast AQMD Governing Board will consider approval of the reclassification request for Coachella Valley on June 7, 2019.

Once the reclassification request is approved by the U.S. EPA, South Coast AQMD staff will proceed to develop a SIP revision to demonstrate attainment of the standard as expeditiously as possible.

There are several existing facilities that are potentially impacted by the reclassification with respect to Title V permitting and NSR requirements. South Coast AQMD staff will work with these facilities on options to minimize potential impacts.

## Upcoming Public Consultation Meetings

South Coast AQMD staff will hold two public consultation meetings on May 1 at the following locations to solicit public comments:

**Wednesday, May 1, 2019**  
**at 2:00 pm**  
**Palm Desert Civic Center Council**  
**Chamber**  
73510 Fred Waring Drive  
Palm Desert, CA 92260

**Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at**  
**6:00 pm**  
**Coachella Branch Library**  
1500 6th Street  
Coachella, CA 92236

**\*Spanish interpretation will be provided at this meeting at [insert name].**

## More Information

For more information on the request for reclassification of Coachella Valley for the 1997 8-hour ozone standard, please contact Kelly Trainor Gamino at (909) 396-2382 or [kgamino@aqmd.gov](mailto:kgamino@aqmd.gov).

The draft staff report with more information on the request for reclassification can be found at: [www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan](http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan).



**South Coast Air Quality Management District**

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