

WHY IS AIR QUALITY IMPORTANT?

Clean air is essential to life and good health. Poor air quality can aggravate respiratory conditions, like asthma, and may be a significant health concern for both children and adults. Protecting against air pollution is especially important in supporting health for elderly and respiratory-vulnerable populations.

WHAT DOES THE CITY DO FOR AIR QUALITY?

The City of Fort Worth's Code Compliance Department has an Environmental Quality Division, and one of its core missions is to help protect air quality in Fort Worth. Through monitoring and inspections, staff works to guard against outdoor air pollution. By working together, we can effectively respond to air quality issues when they arise.

WHAT FACTORS IMPACT OUTDOOR AIR?

Air pollution issues can be classified into a few broad categories; these commonly include: odors/nuisances, ambient air pollutants (e.g. ozone, particulate matter), biological pollutants, and point-source emissions.

- **Ground-Level Ozone:** The sun's UV rays can cause emissions to undergo chemical reactions, resulting in ozone formation near the Earth's surface. Higher air temperatures can speed up these chemical reactions.
- **Biological Pollutants & Particulate Matter (PM):** Smoke, blowing dust, pollen and other microscopic particles can pollute our air.
- **Other Ambient Air Pollutants:** Regular monitoring activities also measure pollutants like carbon monoxide, lead, sulfur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen as other criteria pollutants, in addition to ozone and PM.
- **Point-Source Emissions:** Emissions from specific sources, like manufacturing facilities or various operations, are very specific to the industry or facility and the chemicals that they use.
- **Odors/Nuisances:** At times, chemical-like or foul-smelling odors can be a nuisance and raise concern - sustained odors and nuisances are regulated and must be controlled.

Rainfall, wind speed and other weather impacts can disperse air pollutants.

HOW MANY FACILITIES ARE PERMITTED FOR OPERATION IN MY AREA?

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has a list of approximately 5,500 state-permitted facilities in and around the City of Fort Worth.

WHAT DO INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES DO TO ENSURE THEIR OPERATIONS ARE SAFE?

Industrial facilities that emit air contaminants in the State of Texas are required to be permitted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and are expected to operate in compliance with TCEQ and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) air quality regulations. To ensure compliance, these facilities must have air pollution controls that ensure their employees, local residents and the environment are safe.

ARE SMOKESTACK EMISSIONS HARMFUL TO MY HEALTH?

The vast majority of emissions coming from industrial stacks is steam, which can look like white smoke. This can easily be mistaken for harmful emissions, but in most cases is only water vapor. Industries within the State of Texas are required to maintain minimal emissions levels from smokestacks; the vast majority are required to control their smokestack emissions by as much as 90 to 95 percent in order to continue operations. Such requirements are continually enforced by coordinated efforts among the City's environmental staff, TCEQ and the EPA. If you suspect that smokestack emissions or other releases are affecting your health, please do not hesitate to contact the City's Environmental Quality Division.

DO I NEED TO WORRY ABOUT CHEMICAL PLANTS?

Facilities that manufacture or use chemicals in their processes are heavily regulated. Again, the City, TCEQ and EPA work together to keep these operations safe and in compliance. Other partners may be contacted as needed. This can include the Fort Worth Fire Department or the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration, among others. Facilities are required to maintain safety systems and safety system backups that prevent the release of toxic chemicals. The City of Fort Worth, in collaboration with TCEQ, routinely inspects these facilities to ensure requirements are met. When responding to complaints or concerns, staff can quickly perform compliance inspections to help resolve issues.

HOW CAN I REPORT AIR QUALITY ISSUES TO THE CITY?

Anyone in the community can make air quality inquiries or report air quality concerns using the MyFW app or by contacting the City of Fort Worth Call Center at 817-392-1234, or via email at 1234@fortworthtexas.gov. If there is a need to reach environmental staff directly, feel free to email environmental@fortworthtexas.gov.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IN THE EVENT OF A SUSPECTED CHEMICAL RELEASE?

If there is reason to believe that a toxic chemical has been released into the air in your neighborhood, the first and most important thing to do is to protect yourself - evacuate the area or move to a safe interior space. Once you are safe, alert local emergency services by calling 911. The City of Fort Worth Fire Department is equipped to respond to chemical releases and related emergency situations. The Environmental Quality Division will be contacted in the event of a hazardous air quality emissions release and will coordinate response efforts with the TCEQ and EPA, if necessary.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE CITY?

Anyone who reports an air pollution complaint or concern will be contacted by Environmental Quality Division staff to assist with collecting information related to the issue. An on-site investigation will be conducted. If the investigation reveals any violation, appropriate actions will be taken to ensure that the violation is corrected. Actions could include issuing consent orders requiring the violator to correct the problem and assessing a fine or other enforcement action against the violator through TCEQ. Complaints or concerns can be reported anonymously.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT AIR QUALITY?

- City of Fort Worth: www.FortWorthTexas.gov/env
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality: www.tceq.texas.gov
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security: www.dhs.gov/biowatch-program

QUESTIONS?

Customer Call Center: 817-392-1234
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www.FortWorthTexas.gov/env