

EPA Community Air Monitoring

Air Monitoring on Gulf Coast | EPA Response to BP Spill in the Gulf of Mexico | US EPA Page 1 of 3



EPA Response to BP Spill in the Gulf of Mexico Monitoring Air Quality Along the Gulf Coast

In response to the BP oil spill, EPA monitored air, water, sediment, and the cleanup operations. Ongoing response and restoration efforts are a [Restoration Update](#).

While emergency response data collection has ended, results continue. This site also provides data collected by the public for this site, and data available from the Environmental Registry.

Much of the content of this site continues to be available for historical purposes, but we are no longer updating these pages on a regular basis.

EPA has been monitoring the air at multiple sites on shore along the Gulf Coast to see if spill-related pollutants are present in the air at levels that might cause health problems in the Gulf region. EPA has been monitoring for pollutants that:

- can evaporate from fresh crude oil
- can evaporate from weathered oil
- can come ashore from burning oil out at sea

EPA has also monitored onshore air to determine whether chemicals in the dispersants used offshore are reaching onshore air.

Learn about what EPA has done:

- [What air pollutants have been monitored?](#)
- [What are the possible health effects from breathing these air pollutants?](#)
- [What are the air quality goals?](#)
- [What are the air quality data used?](#)
- [What are the air quality data used for?](#)
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What air pollutants have been monitored?

1. Air pollutants from the oil that may BP into onshore air have volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are associated with all other petroleum products. Some VOCs have a "fun diesel fuel" odor. VOCs in the air may lead to irritation in ground-level ozone. Learn about VOCs [What are the air quality data used?](#)

2. Air pollutants from burning oil that may BP into onshore air are particulate matter, sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and carbon monoxide (CO). These pollutants can irritate the lungs, and when in "combination" with VOCs, may cause health effects. Learn about SO₂ [What are the air quality data used?](#)

3. Air pollutants from dispersants that may BP into onshore air are hydrocarbons, lead, copper, and zinc. These pollutants can irritate the lungs, and when in "combination" with VOCs, may cause health effects. Learn about hydrocarbons [What are the air quality data used?](#)

4. EPA has also monitored for hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) which is associated with natural gas emissions. This oil being spilled in the Gulf, however, is not natural gas emissions. This oil being spilled in the Gulf, however, is not natural gas emissions. This oil being spilled in the Gulf, however, is not natural gas emissions.

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<http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/air-mon.html>

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