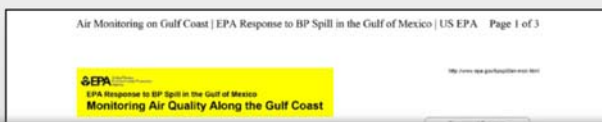


# EPA Community Air Monitoring



**EPA** United States Environmental Protection Agency

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

Last updated on Thursday,  
February 14, 2013

TREX 240159

What air pollutants have been monitored

1. Air pollutants from the oil that may drift into waters are:

- Heavy metals: copper, manganese, nickel, and vanadium
- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs): a group of semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) that are present in crude oil and produced by burning fossil fuels, and remain in "weathered" oil after SVOCs have evaporated. Some of the PAHs are most likely to be found in a spill from a "tar ball" or "oil" slick.

2. Air pollutants from burning on the Gulf that could have drifted into waters or got burning operations have been tracked:

- Particulate pollution (PM): suspended fine dusts of particulate matter, also called particulate pollution (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), which are smaller than 2.5 micrometers in diameter, and coarse particulate (PM<sub>10</sub>), which are smaller than 10 micrometers in diameter.
- Volatile organic compounds (VOCs): these evaporate at atmospheric pressure.
- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs): a group of semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) that are present in crude oil and that form when oil, coal, gas, wood, garbage, or other organic substances are burned.

3. Air pollutants from discharges that may drift into coastal air:

- EPA has monitored the Gulf where air for two compounds in the discharges used to break up oil from the spill.
- 2-butanone
- 1-butanol

4. EPA has also monitored for hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) which is associated with some of oil and natural gas extraction. The oil being spilled in the Gulf, however, is called "sweet" oil.

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

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