



Riverside County has made great strides in achieving state and federal air quality standards. The following provides a description of the six criteria air pollutants and their attainment status in each of the three Riverside County air basins.

#### **Ozone**

Ozone is a pungent, colorless gas typical of southern California smog. Elevated ozone concentrations result in reduced lung function, particularly during vigorous physical activity. Ozone levels peak during the summer and early fall months.

The SOCAB is designated as a non-attainment area for both federal and state ozone standards, meaning that air quality standards are being exceeded. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has classified the entire Southern California Association of Governments region as an “extreme” non-attainment area, and has mandated that the South Coast Air Quality Basin achieve attainment by 2010. The SSAB and MDAB are both designated as non-attainment areas for federal and state ozone standards.

#### **Carbon Monoxide**

Carbon monoxide (CO) is formed by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, almost entirely from automobiles. It is a colorless, odorless gas that can cause dizziness, fatigue and impairments to central nervous system functions.

The SOCAB is designated as a non-attainment area for federal CO standards. However, the Riverside County area of SOCAB has not exceeded either federal or state CO standards in the past five years. The SSAB and MDAB have both been designated as attainment areas for federal and state Carbon Monoxide standards.

#### **Nitrogen Oxides**

Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), a reddish brown gas, and nitric oxide (NO), a colorless odorless gas, are jointly referred to as nitrogen oxides or NO<sub>x</sub>. NO<sub>x</sub> is a primary component of smog and also contributes to other pollution problems such as high concentration of fine particulate matter, poor visibility, and acid deposition. NO<sub>2</sub> decreases lung function and may reduce resistance to infection.

The SOCAB has not exceeded either federal or state standards for nitrogen dioxides in the past five years. It is designated as a maintenance area (an area that was once classified as non-attainment but has recently shown achievement of air quality standards) under federal standards and as an attainment area under state standards. The SSAB and MDAB are designated as attainment areas for both federal and state NO<sub>2</sub> standards.

#### **Sulfur Dioxide**

Sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) is a colorless irritating gas created mainly by industrial facilities. SO<sub>2</sub> irritates the respiratory tract, injures lung tissue when combined with fine particulate matter and reduces visibility and the level of sunlight.

The SOCAB, SSAB and MDAB are all designated as attainment areas for both federal and state sulfur dioxide standards.