



Maricopa County

Air Quality Department
Policies & Procedures

Policies & Procedures:
PP-2006-01

Title: Environmental Justice

Supersedes:
Not apply

Effective: 12-19-06

Initiator: Larry Spivack, LS

Director: Bob Kard, BK

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to formally make Environmental Justice an integral part of all Maricopa County Air Quality Department (MCAQD) activities.

REFERENCE: – not applicable

BACKGROUND:

MCAQD and federal air pollution control programs have made substantial progress towards achieving federal and state air quality standards. These achievements have reduced the exposures of Maricopa County residents to air pollution.

Despite this progress, Maricopa County still exceeds health-based air quality standards for ozone and particulate matter. Attaining the health-based standards for ozone and particulate matter is essential to protect the health of all of the county's residents.

Some communities experience higher exposures than others as a result of the cumulative impacts of air pollution from multiple mobile, commercial, industrial, and other sources. MCAQD shall dedicate resources and work with these communities to develop narrowly tailored remedies to reduce emissions, exposures, and health risks.

Underlying this Policy is a recognition that MCAQD needs to engage community members in a meaningful way as it carries out its activities. Residents should have information about the air they breathe and what is being done to reduce air pollution in their communities.

This Policy is intended to promote the fair treatment of all Maricopa County residents and cover the full spectrum of MCAQD activities. While the primary focus is meeting ambient air quality standards and reducing health risks, additional efforts such as air monitoring and research are needed to better understand the connections between air pollution and health. Effective enforcement of air pollution control requirements in all communities is critical to achieving environmental justice, but education and outreach complete the picture in terms of providing the opportunity for the full participation of all communities. Finally, MCAQD recognizes its obligation to work closely with all stakeholders—communities, environmental and public health organizations, industry, business owners, other agencies, and all other interested parties—to successfully implement its Environmental Justice Policy.

DEFINITIONS:

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

APPLICABILITY:

- A. This Policy is applicable to all branches, divisions, sections, and personnel within MCAQD.
- B. MCAQD approved this Environmental Justice Policy to establish a framework for incorporating environmental justice into its programs. This Policy applies to all communities in Maricopa County, but recognizes that environmental justice issues have been raised more in the context of low-income and minority communities.
- C. While this Policy focuses on MCAQD as an organization, it also reflects the need for state, local and other County agencies to play their part. MCAQD is committed to working as partners with these

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agencies to improve the available information that these agencies use to make planning and permitting decisions. MCAQD is also committed to continuing its aggressive program to control emissions leading to the violation of clean air standards. By working together to improve siting and mitigation practices, and further controlling sources within MCAQD jurisdiction, MCAQD can help address environmental justice issues at the community level throughout Maricopa County.

POLICIES:

A. MCAQD will incorporate environmental justice into all of its programs, policies, and regulations. As an organization, MCAQD will make environmental justice considerations a standard practice in the way business is conducted.

B. MCAQD will work to make information related to air-pollution and community health more accessible to those people working and living in Environmental Justice areas so that these people have an opportunity to take a more active role in decisions affecting air pollution in their communities. MCAQD will take into consideration low-income and minority communities when making this information available.

C. MCAQD will work with local agencies to enhance existing complaint resolution processes and as appropriate, work with the community and act upon community concerns to reduce air emissions.

D. MCAQD will work with communities to promote and encourage the deployment of toxic reduction air emission technologies and other air pollution prevention efforts.

PROCEDURES:

A. MCAQD Programs, Policies, and Regulations:

1. Engage in explicit discussions to ensure that proposed programs, policies, and regulations treat fairly people of all races, cultures, geographic areas, and income levels, including people living in low-income and minority communities.
2. Work with stakeholders to address, as appropriate, community concerns about air pollution emissions, exposures, and health risks, including enhanced public outreach.
3. Work with stakeholders to review current MCAQD programs to address potential environmental justice implications and add new or modified elements consistent with these Policies where there are program gaps.
4. Develop and incorporate an environmental justice program element into Departmental employee training curriculum.
5. Conduct special air monitoring studies in communities where environmental justice or other air quality concerns exist, with the goal of assessing public health risks.

B. Outreach and Education Efforts:

1. Hold meetings in communities affected by MCAQD programs, policies, and regulations at times and in places that encourage public participation, such as evenings and weekends, at centrally located community meeting rooms, libraries, and schools.
2. Assess the need for and provide translation services at public meetings.
3. Hold community meetings to update residents on the results of any special air monitoring programs conducted in their neighborhood.
4. Make staff available to attend meetings of community organizations and neighborhood groups to listen to and, where appropriate, act upon community concerns.
5. Establish within MCAQD a specific contact person for environmental justice issues.
6. Increase public awareness actions that protect public health through the K-12 education system and through outreach opportunities at the community level.
7. Make air quality and regulatory information available to communities in an easily understood and useful format, including fact sheets, mailings, brochures, and web pages.
8. Distribute fact sheets regarding the Environmental Justice Policies.

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9. Develop and maintain as a part of MCAQD web site an area dedicated to community health that includes neighborhood air monitoring results, pollution prevention, risk reduction, and environmental justice activities.
 10. Develop and maintain a web site that provides access to the best available information about sources of air pollution in neighborhoods. Include on the web site ongoing activities to improve the quality of the information, and note the limitations and uncertainties associated with that information.
 11. Allow, encourage, and promote community access to the best available information in our databases on air quality, emission inventory, and other information archives.
 12. Distribute information on how to contact the Environmental Justice point person and MCAQD Public Information Office to obtain information and assistance regarding the Environmental Justice programs, including how to participate in the public processes.
 13. Create and distribute a simple, easy-to-read, and understandable public participation handbook.
 14. Consistent with Arizona State statutes, minimize, reduce, and, where practicable, eliminate fees for public information and enhance access to that information.
- C. Compliance and Enforcement Activities:
1. With input from stakeholders, prioritize field inspections to address categories of facilities that may have significant localized impacts and make those reports easily accessible to the public.
 2. Develop and incorporate an environmental justice awareness element into MCAQD enforcement training curriculum to promote fair enforcement for all communities.
 3. Support efforts to ensure that when there is a facility in non compliance, the air pollution reduction projects or Supplemental Environmental Projects imposed in lieu of penalties will benefit the air quality of the impacted communities.
 4. Work with the communities to develop enhanced complaint resolution processes for addressing environmental justice issues, including procedures that MCAQD staff will follow when complaints are made.
 5. Improve accessibility of information regarding enforcement activities and actions, including notices of violations, monetary penalties, and other settlements of those violations.
 6. Assist local communities on air quality issues of specific concern.
- D. Control Measures and Pollution Prevention Programs:
1. Develop a plan to assist in the achievement of federal and state ambient air quality standards and to reduce health risks.
 2. As part of MCAQD pollution prevention efforts, promote and encourage the deployment of toxic reduction emission technologies especially in low-income and minority communities.
 3. Work within low-income and minority communities to implement incentive programs for industry.

