

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Due to a fire at US Steel's Clairton Coke Works on December 24, the risk of Sulfur dioxide (SO₂) exceedances increased. Exceedances of SO₂ are not uncommon during this time of year due to weather conditions but given the nature of the damage to the plant, ACHD issued an alert out of an abundance of caution for sensitive populations living in the Mon Valley.

Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂)

- Sulfur dioxide is a colorless gas that results from the burning of either sulfur or materials containing sulfur.
- SO₂ has a strong odor similar to a just-struck match and is a respiratory irritant.
- Concentrations over the federal standard for hourly SO₂ emissions (.075 ppm) can affect breathing and may aggravate existing respiratory and cardiovascular disease.
- While the general public is not likely to be affected, sensitive populations, including those with asthma, individuals with bronchitis or emphysema, children, and the elderly, can be at greater risk.
- Anyone experiencing symptoms should see their primary care provider as soon as possible. In case of an emergency, dial 911 or go to the emergency room.



KAREN HACKER, MD, MPH, DIRECTOR
ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
542 FOURTH AVENUE • PITTSBURGH, PA 15219
PHONE (412) 687-ACHD (2243) • FAX (412) 578-8325
WWW.ALLEGHENYCOUNTY.US/HEALTHDEPARTMENT

Frequently Asked Questions

How will I know if there is an SO₂ exceedance?

Until the Clairton Coke Works plant is running under normal operations again, the Health Department will notify the public at 3 p.m. each day on its website, Facebook page and issue an Allegheny Alert if there were any exceedances of the federal SO₂ standard. In the event of an exceedance, updates will be posted more often.

What areas of the county does this effect?

Braddock, Clairton, Dravosburg, Duquesne, East McKeesport, East Pittsburgh, Elizabeth Borough, Elizabeth Township, Forward, Glassport, Jefferson Hills, Liberty, Lincoln, McKeesport, North Braddock, North Versailles, Pleasant Hills, Port Vue, Versailles, Wall, West Elizabeth and West Mifflin.

What should I do if there are additional SO₂ exceedances?

Should additional SO₂ exceedances take place or air quality be poor in your area, ACHD encourages you to limit your outdoor activity, especially those most sensitive to air pollutants.

If I live in one of the effected communities, should I stay inside all day?

No. It's a recommendation that residents in the Mon Valley areas, especially sensitive populations, limit their outdoor activities. ACHD issued the alert out of an abundance of caution.

What should schools be doing in these effected areas?

SO₂ exceedances thus far have been short, but they have also been unpredictable. While no SO₂ exceedances have occurred during school hours, ACHD encourages Mon Valley residents limit their outdoor activities, especially sensitive populations, until further notice.

When will US Steel make the necessary repairs?

There is no timetable at this moment. Health Department officials are having ongoing conversations with plant officials about their efforts to address emissions and have required additional mitigation strategies. Progress on repairs will be announced as additional information becomes available.