



NEWS

For Immediate Release
March 19, 2007

Contact: Karen M. Schkolnick: 415.749.4900

Bay Area Air District to Collect \$382,500 in Penalties from United Airlines

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) announced today that United Airlines has agreed to pay \$382,500 in penalties to settle a series of air quality violations at its SFO-San Francisco International Airport maintenance facility.

"When a company fails to comply with the requirements we have put in place to preserve air quality, it must pay a penalty," said Air District Executive Officer Jack P. Broadbent. "United Airlines has a responsibility to protect the public welfare, and it's our job to make sure they uphold that responsibility."

Some of the most serious violations involved the scrubber system at United's chrome-plating shop. When pressure readings on the scrubber system fell to dangerously low levels, United's technicians failed for eight months to check that the system was operating properly. After the Air District discovered the problem and issued a citation, United again failed to respond a few months later when further warning signs developed.

United also refused to conduct a test of the scrubber system exhaust to determine whether it remained in compliance with applicable air pollution requirements. This test, which is a condition of United's air quality permit, would have determined conclusively whether the scrubber system was functioning properly.

"These violations showed a pattern of disregard for some of the basic features of United's air quality permit," said District Counsel Brian Bunger. "United also demonstrated a lack of foresight in failing to respond to warning signals designed to prevent problems from escalating to more serious stages."

Other violations covered by the settlement included United's substitution of jet fuel for natural gas in a turbine used to generate electricity. United's permit requires that natural gas, the cleanest-burning fuel available, be used in the turbine. In several instances, the turbine emitted more oxides of nitrogen than allowed under the permit. Nitrogen oxides can re-combine with other pollutants to form ozone, the major component of smog.

###