



NEWS

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Air District approves action plan for response to catastrophic incidents

SAN FRANCISCO – To better respond to catastrophic events in the future, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District Board of Directors today voted to take a momentous first step toward expanding its capabilities and resources to better respond to air impacts from these incidents.

This work plan marks a major step in further improving the Air District's regulatory response and communications systems in assisting responding agencies during significant events.

"This Work Plan lays out critical first steps the Air District will undertake to improve our overall response capabilities," said Air District executive officer Jack Broadbent. "When fully implemented, this plan will significantly enhance our capabilities to better prepare us in the future."

The *Work Plan for Action Items Related to Accidental Releases from Industrial Facilities* contains the following action items, along with a schedule for their implementation:

- Continuing the investigation of the Chevron incident in order to take appropriate enforcement action;
- Reviewing and updating Air District incident response procedures;
- Evaluating enhancements to the Air District's air quality monitoring capabilities;
- Developing a rule that would track air emissions at refineries over time and require mitigation of any significant increases, as well as additional community air monitoring;
- Evaluating the Air District's incident response resources and developing amendments to the fee regulation to recover the costs of these resources;
- Evaluating enhancements to community outreach related to incidents; and
- Sponsoring legislation that would provide the Air District with the authority to collect more substantial penalties in order to encourage industries to take proactive measures to avoid accidental releases.

The August 6 fire at the Chevron Richmond Refinery prompted the Air District to consider this series of follow-up actions, intended to reduce the potential for such accidental releases in the future, to improve the Air District's response to such releases and to ensure that affected communities have access to the best resources and timely information. The implementation schedule for most of these items begins in late 2012 and early 2013.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area.

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