



Frequently Asked Questions about the EPM Pilot Program

What is the EPM Pilot Program?

The Engineering Program Manager (EPM) pilot program is a special three-year initiative that is part of a suite of activities to implement [Goal 4](#) of the Air District's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, Be Effective, Accountable, and Customer-Oriented.

Engineering Program Managers will be assigned to complex permit applications (i.e., Authority to Construct and Permit to Operate) to help facilities understand Air District requirements and to assist applicants in navigating the permitting process.

Who can participate in the EPM Pilot Program?

Facilities with complex permit applications – both existing and new applications – can volunteer to participate in the program. Associations may also participate to coordinate program support on behalf of their membership. Selection will be based on established criteria, as well as resource availability.

How is the EPM Pilot Program funded?

Volunteer participants selected for the program will enter into funding agreements with the Air District to cover the cost of EPM services. Following the program's launch, the Air District expects the work EPM's do with partner facilities to be fully funded by voluntary contributions; no fees or general fund resources will be used.

How many Engineering Program Managers will there be?

The Air District will have two full-time EPMs, fully funded by volunteer participant commitments. Starting in FY 2030, and if there is sustained interest, the pilot could transition to a voluntary fee-based model, with additional EPMs available.

Does participating in the EPM Pilot Program mean my permit will be approved?

No. Although EPMs can help permit applicants better understand and navigate the permitting process, all existing Air District requirements and procedures remain in place. There are no shortcuts in the process, and EPMs are not responsible for making decisions about application completeness, project evaluations, or decisions involving permit conditions or final permit actions (i.e., denial or approval).

Does participating in the EPM Pilot Program mean my permit will be expedited?

No. Although EPMs can help streamline permit processing and improve process efficiency and predictability, volunteer participants do not “move to the front of the queue” or bypass any steps in the permitting process. While the Air District expects total time for permitting to decrease for volunteer participants, the EPM pilot program does not expedite permit processing, nor does it bump other applicants already waiting for permit decisions.

How long does it take to process a permit application?

Currently, it takes 90 days or less to process about 60 percent of New Source Review permit applications once all information has been submitted, and 180 days or less to process another 20 percent of complete applications. However, that means the remaining 20 percent – about one in every five applications received – take up to a year or more to complete, with some complex permits taking multiple years. The Air District receives about 1,000 new permit applications each year.

I don't want to volunteer. How does the EPM Pilot Program help me?

Complex permits create process bottlenecks and backlogs for all permit applicants. Spending time in back-and-forth discussions with a facility to collect needed information, or fixing mistakes that could have been prevented, means the engineer isn't available for work on other applications. By making the process for complex permits more efficient, the entire permitting program can run more smoothly. EPMs can also support research and analysis for novel technologies or complicated compliance situations, as well as develop tools and resources that can be used for permits beyond the pilot program. These functions help extend the benefits to the entire universe of permits.

When does the EPM Pilot Program start?

Program setup is currently underway. The Air District will officially launch the pilot by summer of 2026.

My question hasn't been answered. Where can I find out more?

I want to learn about participating in the program. How do I get involved?

To find out more about the EPM Pilot Program, contact Janet Whittick at jwhittick@baaaqmd.gov. We will add to this FAQ sheet as more details become available.

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