

Houston Air Quality

Working to Improve Regional Air Quality

East Harris County manufacturing companies share the common goal of working to improve air quality in the region. As an industry, we are committed to sharing our expertise in monitoring air quality and to continuing our efforts to improve air quality in partnership with local, state and federal officials.

Houston's air quality has improved over the past 15 years, as has our knowledge of regional air quality, thanks to the fact that this region has the most extensive air monitoring network in the country.

This fact sheet, prepared by the East Harris County Manufactures Association (EHCMA), provides information regarding regional air quality issues and industry's ongoing commitment to improve air quality. This city is our home, too. We also work here, live here and raise our families here.

For more information about regional air quality and the Houston Regional Monitoring Corporation, visit www.houstonairquality.com.

The State of Air Monitoring

- ❑ With more than 40 air monitors, Houston has the most extensive monitoring network in the United States.
- ❑ The Houston Regional Monitoring Corporation (HRM) is an important part of Houston's air monitoring system. HRM operates nine monitoring sites and has an annual budget of \$2.2 million.

Evidence of Air Quality Improvement

- ❑ Houston has achieved an 80 percent reduction in key Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) in the past 15 years.
- ❑ Benzene, 1,3 Butadiene are two Volatile Organic Compounds which have been measured and monitored for more than 20 years.
- ❑ Houston meet five of the six National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) established by the federal government. The one standard that Houston is still working to attain is ground-level ozone.
- ❑ The quality of Houston's air compares favorably with other cities when looking at all the NAAQS. According to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) data, 11 cities fail to meet two or more of the NAAQS, including Los Angeles, Phoenix, New York, Pittsburgh, El Paso, Chicago, Greater Connecticut, Denver, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City and St. Louis.

About HRM

- ❑ The goal of the Houston Regional Monitoring network is to provide its members with the best scientific air quality data available so its members are able to make the best decisions about ways to effectively reduce air emissions.

Houston Air Quality

About HRM...

- Using this data, HRM is committed to the scientific understanding of air quality in the Houston area. Its efforts focus on demonstrating attainment of all air quality standards.
- HRM uses EPA-approved methods and equipment. Its sampling methods are routinely audited by the EPA.
- Since established in 1980 HRM has invested nearly \$30 million in gathering and analyzing ambient air data. It is voluntarily funded by its members, 44 Houston Ship Channel companies.
- HRM shares its data with the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality, the City of Houston and Harris County. It also shares its data with citizens, elected officials and other agencies.

Continued Investments to Improve Air Quality

- While great strides have been made, industry will invest between \$4-6 billion by 2008 to make further improvements in air quality. This investment is in addition to the substantial investment made in the 1990s.
- Industry continues to invest to improve both monitoring and control equipment.
- EHCMA member companies are working to implement Highly Reactive Volatile Organic Compounds (HRVOC) reduction rules passed by the Texas Council on Environmental Quality in December 2004. 1,3 BD is included in these rules as an HRVOC. While it is too early to know exactly what steps or projects will be implemented to achieve this reduction, and how much reduction will be achieved, it is likely to be significant.

Our commitment to the community

- For more than 20 years, EHCMA member companies have worked with all stakeholders, including communities and regulators, in striving for improved environmental performance. Our active participation in our local communities helps us understand the concerns and information needs of our neighbors, and helps to drive industry's improved performance. We are committed to continue this important work.
- We host 10 Community Advisory Council/Panel meetings on average, each month, which bring together industry representatives and our neighbors with diverse backgrounds and views for open dialogue on relevant issues. Topics include plant operations, emergency response, odors and pollution, safety, health, and environment, and product stewardship. We share Toxic Release Inventory reports and hear air quality updates from the Houston Regional Monitoring Network and other monitoring agencies such as TCEQ and the U.S. EPA.
- EHCMA member companies participate in Local Emergency Planning Committees, where we share information about our operations.
- EHCMA launched an odor-reporting network (CAER Line) in 2003 which represents a voluntary effort to help companies identify and eliminate odor sources. It also provides neighbors with an immediate means of alerting companies of odor concerns. Participating in the odor network is a requirement of EHCMA membership. EHCMA actively promotes the CAER Line and the Odor Network in the community.