

SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Final –Methodology to Calculate Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 and PM 2.5 Significance Thresholds

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction.....	1
Background.....	1
Methodology to Calculate PM2.5.....	2
Localized Significance Threshold for PM2.5 Emissions.....	4
Regional Emissions Threshold of Significance for PM2.5.....	7
Conclusion.....	8

Tables

Table 1 Federal Standards for Particulate Matter.....	1
Table 2 California Standards for Particulate Matter.....	2
Table 3 Total Stationary Source Fuel Combustion Inventory (Tons/Day).....	6
Table 4 Total Fugitive PM Inventory (Tons/Day).....	6
Table 5 Combustion PM Inventory from Off-Road Equipment (Tons/Day).....	7
Table 6 Regional Air Quality Significance Thresholds.....	7

**APPENDIX A - UPDATED CEIDARS TABLE LIST WITH PM2.5
FRACTIONS**

**APPENDIX B – PM2.5 LOCALIZED SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD
LOOK-UP TABLES**

Introduction

In the last few years, both California and the federal governments have established ambient air quality standards for fine particulate matter (PM) less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5). As a result, there is a need to establish a methodology for calculating PM2.5 and appropriate PM2.5 significance thresholds for the purpose of analyzing local and regional PM2.5 air quality impacts in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) air quality analyses. This document provides a methodology for calculating PM2.5 and recommendations for localized and regional PM2.5 significance thresholds.

Background

PM larger than 2.5 microns and less than 10 microns, often referred to as the coarse PM fraction (or PM10), is mostly produced by mechanical processes. These include automobile tire wear, industrial processes such as cutting and grinding, and re-suspension of particles from the ground or road surfaces by wind and human activities such as construction or agriculture. In contrast, PM less than or equal to PM2.5 is mostly derived from combustion sources, such as automobiles, trucks, and other vehicle exhaust, as well as from stationary combustion sources. The particles are either directly emitted or are formed in the atmosphere from the combustion of gases, such as NO_x and SO_x combining with ammonia. PM2.5 components from material in the earth's crust, such as dust, are also present, with the amount varying in different locations. Staff's recommendation for calculating PM2.5 focuses only on directly emitted PM2.5.

In 1997, U.S. EPA established an annual and a 24-hour standard for the finest fraction of particulates, PM2.5, to complement the existing PM10 standards. However, U.S. EPA recently modified the 24-hr PM2.5 standard and revoked the annual PM10 standard. (Table 1). The annual component of the standard was established to provide protection against typical day-to-day exposures as well as longer-term exposures, while the daily component protects against more extreme short-term events.

TABLE 1
Federal Standards for Particulate Matter

Federal Standards	PM 10	PM 2.5
Annual	Revoked ^a	15 µg/m ³
24-Hour	150 µg/m ³	35 µg/m ³ ^b

In June 2002, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopted new, stricter standards for particulate matter that would affect both the coarse as well as fine particulate fraction (Table 2). CARB delayed action on the proposed 24-hour PM2.5 standard in light of the

^a U.S. EPA final rulemaking for CFR 40 Part 50.7 National Primary and Secondary Ambient Air Quality Standards at http://epa.gov/pm/pdfs/20060921_rule.pdf

^b U.S. EPA final rulemaking for CFR 40 Part 50.13 National Primary and Secondary Ambient Air Quality Standards at http://epa.gov/pm/pdfs/20060921_rule.pdf

findings related to statistical issues in several key short-term exposure health effects studies.

TABLE 2

California Standards for Particulate Matter

California Standards	PM 10	PM 2.5
Annual	20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	12 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
24-Hour	50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	n/a

Methodology to Calculate PM 2.5

Because there are currently few or no PM2.5 emission factors for mechanical or combustion processes, staff is recommending an indirect approach to calculating PM2.5 emissions until such time as PM2.5 factors are developed. Since PM2.5 is a subset of PM10, the current methodology for calculating PM10 from fugitive dust sources (grading, demolition, unpaved roads, open storage piles, etc.) and combustion sources (stationary combustion sources, vehicle exhaust) will continue to be used to calculate PM10 and can also be used to calculate PM2.5. Total suspended PM (TSP) emissions typically contain specific fractions of PM10 and PM2.5 that can be measured. In general, PM from fugitive dust generating sources is primarily composed of PM10 with a relatively small fraction of the fugitive PM consisting of PM2.5. Alternatively, PM from combustion sources is primarily composed of PM2.5 with a small fraction consisting of PM10.

To calculate both PM10 and PM2.5, existing PM10 calculation methodologies for both fugitive dust PM10 and combustion PM10 can be used. To determine the PM2.5 fractions of the PM10 emission results, staff is recommending that the PM10 emissions be calculated using standard PM10 calculation methodologies. The PM10 emission results for each emission source or operation would then be multiplied by the applicable PM2.5 fraction, derived by emissions source, using PM profiles in the California Emission Inventory Data and Reporting System (CEIDARS) developed by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The CEIDARS PM profiles are used to develop emission inventories for a variety of sources and operations in the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). The CEIDARS PM profiles have been streamlined to be used for most types of processes that would be encountered in a CEQA or NEPA document. In addition, AQMD staff has identified the PM2.5 fraction of PM10. The streamlined CEIDARS PM profiles can be found in Appendix A. The CEIDARS PM profiles may be updated as necessary to reflect updates prepared by CARB.

If the project being evaluated is not listed among the categories in Appendix A, then the closest related type of operation/process should be used. For example in analyzing construction activities, e.g., grading, earth moving, etc., if the specific activity is not located in the tables the CEQA practitioner can use the following default factors derived from the 2003 AQMP annual inventories (see Tables 3 and 4 below under the “Localized Significance Thresholds for PM2.5 Emissions” discussion). For mechanical dust generating sources, e.g., construction, the PM2.5 fraction of PM10 is 21 percent and for combustion sources the PM2.5 fraction of PM10 is 99 percent. For off-road combustions

sources, the PM2.5 fraction default would be 89 percent (Table 5). Other publicly available and peer reviewed sources of PM10 and PM2.5 emission factors can also be used if they more closely match the type of emission source than the sources identified in Appendix A. In addition, site-specific or project-specific information can be used.

Once the PM10 fractions from all emissions sources are calculated, these are summed and compared to the appropriate PM10 significance thresholds to determine whether or not a project is significant. Similarly, once the PM2.5 fractions from all emissions sources have been calculated, these are also summed (separate from the PM10 fractions) and compared to the appropriate PM2.5 significance threshold (see following discussion) to determine project significance.

The PM2.5 fraction of PM10 can be easily calculated as follows.

Step 1: Calculate PM10 emissions for each emissions source category.

Step 2: Look up the PM2.5 fraction of PM10 for the applicable source category by year that construction will occur or operation of the project will begin (Appendix A, column 6 of the appropriate table).

Step 3: Multiply the PM2.5 fraction by the PM10 emissions for each source category (PM2.5 emissions = PM10 emissions x [PM2.5 fraction])

Step 4: Sum the PM2.5 emissions from each emissions source.

Step 5: Compare PM2.5 emissions to the appropriate significance threshold.

Example:

A project is estimated to generate 8 pounds per day of PM10 from one piece of construction equipment. The PM2.5 emissions are as follows:

PM2.5 emissions = 8 pounds of PM10 per day x 0.89 = 7.12 pounds of PM2.5 per day.

In conjunction with establishing a methodology for calculating PM2.5, staff has developed the following recommended PM2.5 significance thresholds for both localized and regional significance for both construction and operation.

Localized Significance Thresholds for PM 2.5 Emissions

Localized significance thresholds (LSTs) were developed in response to the SCAQMD Governing Board's environmental justice (EJ) initiatives (EJ initiative I-4) in recognition of the fact that criteria pollutants, carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NOx), and PM10 in particular, can have local impacts as well as regional impacts. The LST proposal went through extensive public outreach and was adopted by the Governing Board in October 2003. At the time the LST was adopted by the Governing Board, staff had not yet developed proposed LSTs for PM2.5.

Determining localized air quality impacts requires dispersion modeling. Because local lead agencies may not have the expertise or resources to perform dispersion modeling, SCAQMD created a series of look-up tables for CO, NO_x, and PM₁₀ in which staff back-calculated the mass emissions necessary to equal or exceed the construction or operation LST. The look-up tables were created for projects one to five acres in size and take into consideration location (source receptor area) and distance to the sensitive receptor. To use the look-up tables, the lead agency calculates daily emission as it normally would and then compares the results to the emissions in the applicable look-up table.

In general, the LSTs will apply primarily to construction because emissions from construction equipment occur at a fixed location compared to operation, which, for most land use projects, consists of emissions from vehicles traveling over the roadways, which, therefore, do not create impacts to a single location. To further assist lead agencies with calculating construction emissions, the SCAQMD conducted construction site surveys for each phase of construction to develop standard construction scenarios relative to construction equipment and hours of operation. Spreadsheets were developed to calculate emissions for the construction scenarios in an effort to create scenarios that would not exceed any applicable LSTs. When preparing a CEQA analysis, lead agencies could use the sample construction projects for their construction analyses, use the spreadsheets to tailor the analysis to their individual projects, or use a combination of the two.

The following subsections describe the proposed PM_{2.5} LSTs for both operation and construction.

Establishing LSTs

To determine the effects of PM_{2.5} on local (nearby) receptors, such as residents, hospitals, schools, etc., a PM_{2.5} localized significance threshold (LST) needs to be established. Since the Basin exceeds one or more of the state or federal ambient air quality standards for PM_{2.5}, the process used to determine significance for attainment pollutants, i.e., NO₂ and CO, developed for the LST program cannot be used^c. Under the LST program, since PM₁₀ is a nonattainment pollutant, the LST methodology uses a different process for determining whether localized PM₁₀ air quality impacts are significant. To determine localized PM₁₀ air quality impacts during operation, the LST methodology uses as a significance threshold the allowable change in concentration threshold for PM₁₀ listed in Rule 1303, Table A-2, which is 2.5 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³). The allowable change in concentration threshold is a modeled concentration that cannot be exceeded at the sensitive receptor, and determines whether or not a permit applicant will receive a permit from the SCAQMD. For the LST program staff used a dispersion model (ISCST3) to convert the 2.5 µg/m³ concentration into mass daily PM₁₀ emissions numbers based on the size of the project, location of the project, and distance to the sensitive receptor. The

^c Under the LST program, to determine significance for attainment pollutants, the emissions contribution from the project expressed as a concentration is added to the highest local ambient concentration from the last three years where data are available. If the sum is equal to or greater than any applicable state or federal ambient air quality standard, the project is considered to have significant localized air quality impacts for that pollutant. More information on the LST program can be found at the following URL: <http://www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/handbook/LST/LST.html>.

results were then incorporated into an LST look-up table. If the mass emissions from a project exceed the applicable LST look-up tables' mass emission numbers (which are based on the $2.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ concentration), then localized PM10 air quality impacts are considered to be significant.

Operational Localized Significance Thresholds

To establish operational PM2.5 localized significance thresholds, staff first reviewed the PM inventories in Appendix III of the 2003 AQMP. In particular, staff evaluated the composition of PM10 and PM2.5 from combustion processes in the 2003 AQMP to establish a general ratio of PM2.5 to PM10. Combustion processes were evaluated because, for most land use projects, mobile source combustion emissions comprise the majority of emissions. Table 3 shows the total PM10 and PM2.5 inventories for total fuel combustion process for the years 2005 through 2010. As can be seen in Table 3, over the five-year timeframe considered, the fraction of combustion PM10 that consists of PM2.5 is consistently 99 percent. Since combustion PM10 and PM2.5 fractions are essentially equivalent, staff is recommending that the operational localized significance threshold for PM2.5 be the same as the current operational localized significance threshold for PM10, i.e., $2.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

TABLE 3

Total Stationary Source Fuel Combustion Inventory (Tons/Day)

Year	PM 10	PM 2.5	Percent of PM 10 which is PM 2.5
2005	8.13	8.01	99
2006	8.21	8.10	99
2007	8.30	8.18	99
2008	8.38	8.26	99
2010	8.54	8.42	99

Source: Appendix III, 2003 AQMP, Annual Average Emission Inventory

Construction Localized Significance Thresholds

Similarly, to develop a PM2.5 construction significance threshold for localized impacts, staff considered the PM2.5 contribution from fugitive sources and the PM2.5 contribution from combustion sources (construction equipment). As discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs, combustion emissions from the construction equipment contribute a larger portion of the total PM2.5 emissions from construction operations than fugitive sources.

Staff then reviewed the 2003 AQMP, Appendix III fugitive PM inventory for construction and demolition to obtain the PM10 and PM2.5 compositions. Table 4 shows the total PM10 and PM2.5 inventories for construction activities for the years 2005 through 2010. As can be seen in Table 4, over the five-year timeframe, the fraction of PM10 that consists of PM2.5 is consistently 21 percent. Multiplying the fugitive PM2.5 percent fraction of

PM10 by the existing construction PM10 LST, 10.4 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, produces a result of approximately 2.2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

TABLE 4
Total Fugitive PM Inventory (Tons/Day)

Year	PM 10	PM 2.5	Percent of PM 10 which is PM 2.5
2005	42.7	8.91	21
2006	43.66	9.11	21
2007	44.6	9.3	21
2008	45.54	9.5	21
2010	47.44	9.9	21

Source: Appendix III, 2003 AQMP, Annual Average Emission Inventory

Off-road construction equipment, however, also contributes combustion PM as well as fugitive PM. To determine the contribution of PM2.5 from construction equipment combustion emissions, staff performed dispersion modeling using the ISCST3 dispersion model for one-, two-, and five-acre construction scenarios. The construction scenarios were developed from construction site surveys conducted in connection with staff's original LST proposal. Combustion sources were modeled as adjacent five-meter volume sources and fugitive sources were modeled as adjacent one-meter area sources. Worst-case meteorological data from the West Los Angeles source receptor area were used and receptors were placed at 25, 50, 100, 200, and 500 meter distances from the construction site. Using CARB speciation data, it was assumed that 21 percent of fugitive dust PM10 is comprised of PM2.5 and 89 percent of off-road equipment combustion PM10 emissions are comprised of PM2.5 (based 2003 AQMP inventories, see Table 5).

TABLE 5
Combustion PM Inventory from Off-Road Equipment (Tons/Day)

Year	PM 10	PM 2.5	Percent of PM 10 which is PM 2.5
2005	11.95	10.64	89
2006	11.61	10.33	89
2007	11.2	9.97	89
2008	10.93	9.71	89
2010	10.26	9.09	89

Source: Appendix III, 2003 AQMP, Annual Average Emission Inventory

The modeling results showed that combustion PM2.5 from off-road equipment comprise approximately 75 to 100 percent of the total PM2.5 emissions from construction activities. Further, the PM2.5 contribution from fugitive sources is dependant on the construction phase. For example, the modeling showed that the demolition and site preparation phases have the highest fugitive PM2.5 contribution to the overall results, whereas, the building and asphalt paving phases contribute the most combustion PM2.5 to the overall results.

The modeling results indicate that the contribution of off-road combustion PM2.5 emissions can be three to four times higher than the contribution of PM2.5 from fugitive sources. Based on this result, staff recommends that the PM2.5 fugitive dust component be adjusted upward by approximately four times to account for the PM2.5 emissions from the construction equipment. As a result, staff is recommending a PM2.5 construction LST of $10.4 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, the same as the construction LST for PM10. Finally, an exceedance of either the PM10 construction LST or the PM2.5 construction LST is a significant adverse localized air quality impact.

Regional Emission Threshold of Significance for PM 2.5

Emissions that exceed the regional significance thresholds are mass daily emissions that may have significant adverse regional effects and are the air quality significance thresholds with which most CEQA practitioners are familiar.

Table 6
Regional Air Quality Significance Thresholds

<i>Mass Daily Thresholds^a</i>		
Pollutant	Construction^b	Operation^c
NOx	100 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
VOC	75 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
PM10	150 lbs/day	150 lbs/day
SOx	150 lbs/day	150 lbs/day
CO	550 lbs/day	550 lbs/day
Lead	3 lbs/day	3 lbs/day

The following subsection describes the proposed PM2.5 regional significance thresholds for both operation and construction.

Establishing Regional Significance Thresholds

PM emissions also affect air quality on a regional basis. When fugitive dust enters the atmosphere, the larger particles of dust typically fall quickly to the ground, but smaller particles less than 10 microns in diameter may remain suspended for longer periods, giving the particles time to travel across a regional area and affecting receptors at some distance from the original emissions source. Fine PM2.5 particles have even longer atmospheric residency times. Staff is recommending a PM2.5 regional significance threshold based on a recent EPA proposal, as explained in the following paragraphs.

On September 8, 2005, EPA published in the Federal Register “Proposed Rule to Implement the Fine Particle National Ambient Air Quality Standards,” which proposed a significant emission rate for PM2.5 of 10 tons per year. Staff is proposing to use EPA’s

significant emission rate for PM2.5 to develop the daily mass emission regional significance threshold for PM2.5. Converting the annual rate, 10 tons, into a daily rate produces a daily rate of approximately 55 pounds per day. A similar approach was used to derive the operational regional significance thresholds for NO2 and VOC. NO2 and VOC operational regional significance thresholds were derived by using the NOx/VOC emission rate that defined a major source in the South Coast Air Basin, 10 tons per year. Converting the annual emissions rate into a daily rate resulted in a regional operational significance threshold of 55 pounds per day for each pollutant. Similar to the regional significance threshold for PM10 of 150 pounds per day, the proposed PM2.5 regional significance threshold of 55 pounds per day would apply to both construction and operation.

Conclusion

In this document staff identified a methodology to indirectly calculate PM2.5 emissions for a CEQA or NEPA air quality analysis, to be used until such time as PM2.5 emission factors are available, which will allow the CEQA practitioner to calculate PM2.5 emissions directly. In addition, PM2.5 construction and operation LSTs have been identified to address localized impacts. The PM2.5 LSTs will be used to develop look-up tables for projects five acres in size or smaller, similar to those prepared for PM10, nitrogen dioxide (NO2), and carbon monoxide (CO). As with the other pollutants, the PM2.5 look-up tables can be used as a screening procedure to determine whether or not small projects (less than or equal to five acres) will generate significant adverse localized air quality impacts. Screening procedures are by design conservative, that is, the predicted impacts tend to overestimate the actual impacts. If the predicted impacts are acceptable using the LST look-up tables, then a more detailed evaluation is not necessary. However, if the predicted impacts are significant, then the project proponent may wish to perform a more detailed emission and/or modeling analysis before concluding that the impacts are significant. Project proponents are not required to use this LST procedure; and may complete site specific modeling instead. Site-specific modeling is required for projects larger than five acres.