

Dominguez Channel Odor Incident

Preparing to Return to Home

Tip Sheet

Residents who temporarily relocated due to the foul odors of hydrogen sulfide related to the Dominguez Channel should review this guidance and begin to take steps now to prepare for returning home.

The Air Quality, in Relationship to Hydrogen Sulfide Levels, Has Improved Significantly.

The current California Ambient Air Quality Standard for hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) is 30 parts per billion (ppb) for a 1-hour average exposure. The H₂S standard was adopted by the California Air Resources Board for the purpose of odor control.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) has reported that the average 1-hour H₂S levels in the surrounding communities have continued to decrease. Reported 1-hour average levels of H₂S have been at or below 10 parts per billion (ppb) (substantially below the California 1-hour standard of 30 ppb for H₂S) for at least seven consecutive days for all local South Coast AQMD community air monitors, except for the 213th/Chico monitor in Carson. Levels detected at the 213th/Chico monitor have also continued to decrease. For the last three days (11/6 through 11/8/2021), its reported 1-hour average H₂S levels have been between 2.2 – 37.3 ppb, with 58% of the reported levels at or below 10 ppb and 8% from 30 to 37.3 ppb. The results of South Coast AQMD's air monitoring can be found on their website – [Dominguez Channel Odor Event](#).

To see the real-time community air monitoring readings for hydrogen sulfide levels nearest your home, as well as past data, please visit [South Coast AQMD's Rule 180 Community Air Monitoring webpage](#).

Preparing to Return Home

1. Check inside your home for foul odors. Before returning home to stay, go home and check for foul odors inside. Spoiled food and trash with food can also cause foul odors inside. Make sure any food or drink products that smell bad or have signs of spoilage are put in an outdoor trash can with a lid. Remember, "when in doubt, throw it out."
2. Air out your home/residence, if needed. If foul odors inside your home are greater than outside of your home, open your windows and doors for at least 2 hours to flush air out of your home. Close your windows and doors afterward.
3. Take steps to improve the air quality inside your home before returning home if you have not done so already. Consider increasing the flow of air inside for a while to improve air quality in your home inside before returning.
 - a) For those with a central HVAC system,
 - i. if not already done, replace the HVAC filter with one that is the appropriate size for your system and is designated as HEPA or MERV-rated with activated charcoal

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- ii. run the system with the windows and doors closed for at least 30 minutes before returning home. See tips below on HVAC systems. If you do not wish to cool or heat the indoor air, place the HVAC settings to operate the fan only.
 - iii. Using the HVAC system with activated charcoal(carbon) filters and a portable air purifier with activated carbon can also help improve air quality and decrease odors.
- b) For those without a central HVAC system, consider using certified portable air purifiers with a HEPA/activated charcoal filter to improve indoor air quality, especially if there is no central HVAC system. If possible, run the portable air purifier for at least 2 hours before returning home. See tips below on operating the air purifier. See the sections below on Choosing an Air Purifier with Activated Carbon and Using an Air Purifier.

REMINDER. You can still get reimbursed for central HVAC HEPA filters with activated charcoal, obtain or get reimbursement for portable HEPA air purifiers with activated carbon, and get reimbursement for temporary relocation costs from County Public Works by going <https://lacounty.gov/emergency>. For assistance, call 2-1-1.

Please be sure to review the County terms and reimbursement rates for air filters, air purifiers, and relocation costs and submit your request for reimbursement on County Public Work's Dominguez Incident Reimbursement and Assistance Application on the following website: <https://dpw.lacounty.gov/general/eforms/SimpleWorkflow/522.aspx>.

4. *Pay attention to your health when odors are present.* If you have any symptoms that feel life threatening, seek immediate medical care. If symptoms are persistent, worrisome, or worsening, seek medical attention and relocate to another area where the odors is not present.

For more information on protective measures to prevent odors from entering the home or if you continue to experience symptoms due to odors after taking the above steps to improve the air quality in your home, please contact the Public Health Community line at 626-430-9821 and leave a message with your contact information. Your call will be returned. The message line will be checked every hour between 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day.

After Returning Home to Stay

- If any foul odors are present outdoors, close your windows and doors. Keep doors and windows closed as much as possible to prevent outdoor odors from entering, especially when odors are present outdoors. Air out your home when odors are not present.
- Continue to pay attention to your health when the odor is present, as noted above.
- Avoid prolonged outdoor activities whenever outdoor odors are strong to reduce your exposure.
- Improve the air quality inside your home.
 - If you have a central HVAC system, replace the HVAC filter with HEPA or MERV-rated filters with activated charcoal.

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- If you do not have a central HVAC system, use certified portable HEPA indoor air filters with activated charcoal to improve air quality inside of a room.
- Monitor your pets for symptoms. Keep pets indoors when odors are present outside. If you notice any of the following in your pets, don't hesitate to contact your local veterinarian: difficulty breathing, vomiting, lethargy, or nausea.

It is important to note that odors may come and go, even if the hydrogen sulfide levels are below the California Ambient Air Standard (30 ppb). Some people can smell hydrogen sulfide in the air at levels as low as 0.4 ppb. Hydrogen sulfide occurs both naturally and from human-made processes and some hydrogen sulfide is always present in the air ("background levels"). Hydrogen sulfide is associated with municipal sewers and sewage treatment plants, decomposing waste, gas and oil drilling operations, farms with manure storage or livestock confinement facilities, and landfills.

If you notice "rotten egg" or "sulfur" odors, you can continue to report them online with South Coast Air Quality Management District at <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/complaints>, or by telephone at 1-800-CUT-SMOG (1-800-288-7664).

If you continue to experience symptoms due to odors after taking steps to improve air quality in your home, please contact the Public Health Community line at 626-430-9821 and leave a message with your contact information, and your call will be returned. The message line will be checked every hour between 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day.

Tips for Air Purifiers

Choosing an air purifier with HEPA filters with activated carbon

- Portable units are best for use in a single room, rather than whole house use, because of their limited capacity to circulate large volumes of filtered air.
- Use a certified portable indoor air purifier with a HEPA filter with activated charcoal.
- Make sure the square footage on the air purifier is the appropriate size for the room in which it will be used.
- Be sure to follow your specific air purifier's instructions, especially when running while no one is home.

Central Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems

- HVAC system with activated charcoal (carbon) filters together with the air purifier will help with lowering odor levels.
- If you do not wish to cool or heat the indoor air, place the HVAC settings to operate the fan only.

If you will be requesting reimbursement, please be sure to review the County terms and reimbursement rates for air filters, air purifiers, and relocation costs on County Public Work's Dominguez Incident Reimbursement and Assistance Application on the following website:

<https://dpw.lacounty.gov/general/eforms/SimpleWorkflow/522.aspx>.

