

Pima County Department of Environmental Quality

Air Quality Permits Purpose and Process

I. Air Quality Regulations

The purpose of air quality regulations in Pima County is to control air polluting activities to protect public health, safety and welfare. Air quality regulations are developed at the federal, state, and local levels. The Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ) was created in 1989 by the Pima County Board of Supervisors and is the primary agency that implements air quality regulations in Pima County.

A key tool in assuring that facilities comply with air quality regulations is the issuance of a permit. A permit allows the regulated facility to be knowledgeable of all applicable air quality regulations and allows the regulating agency to be familiar with the type of operations at the facility and the methods of air pollution controls used. Air quality regulations lay out the requirements and process for the application and issuance of an air quality permit.

II. Air Quality Permitting Process

1. Facility submits an air quality permit application to PDEQ.
2. PDEQ performs a preliminary review of the application to ensure it is complete.
3. A preliminary draft of the permit is prepared, based upon the facility's application and PDEQ's review of federal, state, and local air quality regulations.
4. The preliminary draft permit is sent to the facility for review and comment. Comments received by the facility are evaluated by PDEQ.
5. The formal draft permit and Technical Support Document are made available to the public for a minimum 30-day public comment period. During this period, the public may review and comment on the formal draft permit.
6. If requested during the public comment period, PDEQ holds a formal a public hearing.
7. After a 30-day notice, the public hearing is held at which the public may offer comments orally or in writing on the draft permit.
8. All comments received during the public comment period or the public hearing are reviewed and evaluated by PDEQ. Modifications to the draft permit may be made by PDEQ based upon comments received.
9. If the changes are substantive, a new 30-day public notice will be initiated to allow the public to review and comment on the changes made to the permit.
10. When all public notice processes are completed, PDEQ prepares a written response to comments and makes a final permit decision to either issue or deny the air quality permit.
11. For sources subject to requirements under Title V of the Clean Air Act, the proposed permit, supporting documents, public comments received on the permit, and PDEQ's proposed responses to those comments are reviewed by the Administrator of EPA.
12. Notice of the permit decision, written response to comments developed by PDEQ, and how to appeal the permitting decision are sent to the facility and all individuals who commented during the comment period or public hearing.