
Indoor Air Quality in California: New Evidence and Environmental Justice

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Outline

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	2 Priority Indoor Air Pollutants of Concern		Pages 9–15
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3 Health Effects



4 Vulnerable Groups



5 Regulatory Framework



6 Pathway to Healthier IAQ



7 Future Priorities

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Background



Cr. EnergyLogic

As required by Assembly Bill 1173, CARB staff compiled a comprehensive report in 2005 on indoor air pollution.

2002

Report preparation

- Indoor air pollutants
- Existing regulations and practices
- Possible mitigation options

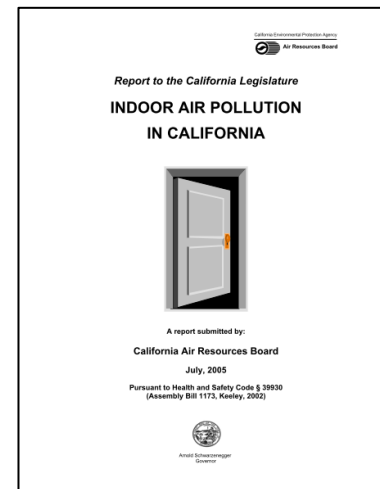
Externally scientific review

Kirk R. Smith, UC Berkeley
S. Katharine Hammond, UC Berkeley
William W. Nazaroff, UC Berkeley
Richard Sextro, LBNL

2005

Submission to the Legislature

2023?





Project Objectives

- ❑ What are the priority indoor air pollutants in California?
- ❑ How can exposures to these pollutants be mitigated to enhance human health protection?





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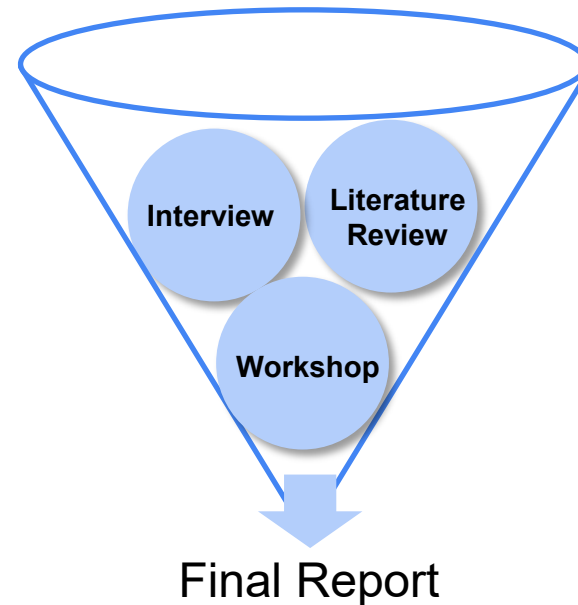
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Project Approach

Parties



Main Tasks





Literature Review

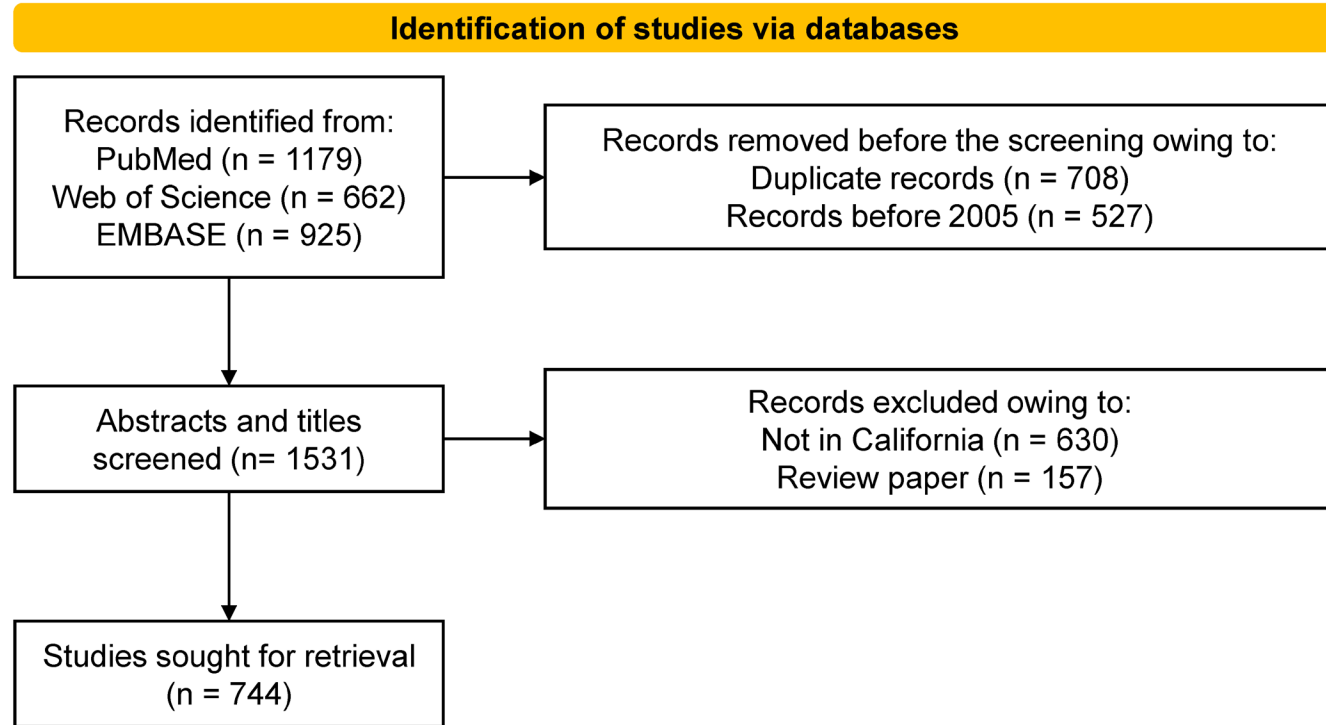
PRISMA Systematic Review

- ❑ Searched with terms: ('indoor air pollution' or 'indoor air quality' or 'household air pollution' or 'household air quality') and 'California'
- ❑ Cut-off date 10/12/2023
- ❑ Post-cutoff wildfire studies included to reflect findings related to the 2025 Los Angeles Fires
- ❑ Post-cutoff regulatory and agency documents included to reflect most recent policies

Identification

Screening

Included





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Interviews



PHYSICIANS FOR
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER

CCAC

Central California
Asthma Collaborative



PSR-**LA**
Physicians for Social Responsibility Los Angeles

- 32 community members, 17 in English and 15 in Spanish.
- 10 interviewees from government agencies, academia, organizations, and manufacturers.

HELP SHAPE CALIFORNIA'S
INDOOR AIR POLICY
Share your insights and concerns on
indoor air quality by participating in our
interviews



Community Members!
We invite you to participate in an
interview to help update California's
Indoor Air Quality Report. Your
personal experience and insights
will help provide an environmental
justice perspective which is key to
making sure CA's new air standards
protect all our communities.

How Can You Participate?

- Each interview will last about 45 minutes.
- Interviews may be done in person or by video call, based on your preference.
- All interviews will be recorded with your informed consent and kept strictly confidential.

**RECEIVE \$100 FOR
PARTICIPATING IN
INDOOR AIR
QUALITY
INTERVIEWS!**

Who Can Participate?

- Anyone aged 18 or older
- No prior expertise in air quality is necessary
- Individuals from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply

Interested? Contact us to sign up or learn more!
Name, Email address

UCLA Fielding
School of Public Health

PHYSICIANS FOR
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER

The interviews are funded by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and collaborated with SF Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR-Bay). #BOS1000770

AYUDE A DEFINIR LA
POLÍTICA DE AIRE
INTERIOR DE CALIFORNIA
Comparta sus perspectivas e
inquietudes sobre la calidad del aire
interior participando en nuestras
entrevistas.



¡Miembros de la comunidad!
Los invitamos a participar en una entrevista
para ayudar a actualizar el **Reporte de
Calidad del Aire Interior** de California. Su
experiencia y perspectivas personales nos
ayudarán a brindar una perspectiva de
justicia ambiental, clave para garantizar que
los nuevos estándares de calidad del aire de
California protegen a todas nuestras
comunidades.

¿Cómo participar?

- Cada entrevista tendrá una duración aproximada de 45 minutos.
- Las entrevistas pueden realizarse en persona o por videollamada, según sus preferencias.
- Todas las entrevistas se grabarán con su consentimiento informado y se mantendrán estrictamente confidenciales.

¿Quién puede participar?

- Mayor de 18 años.
- No se requiere experiencia previa en calidad del aire.
- Se anima a personas de diversos orígenes a participar.

**¿Te interesa? ¡Contáctanos para registrarte o
para obtener más información!**

Name, Email Address, maybe Phone Number as well

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School of Public Health

PHYSICIANS FOR
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
LOS ANGELES

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Indoor Air Pollutants of Concern and Sources

Indoor air quality is shaped by two dominant pathways:



Indoor emissions
gas appliances, cooking, consumer products, building materials, smoking/vaping



Outdoor infiltration
wildfire smoke, traffic pollution, ozone, ambient PM



TRADITIONAL



EMERGING

PRIORITY INDOOR AIR POLLUTANTS



PM_{2.5}



NO₂



VOCs
(benzene, formaldehyde, acrolein)



Wildfire Smoke



PFAS

MAJOR INDOOR SOURCES



Cooking
(especially frying)



Gas stoves



Candles



Smoking



Outdoor infiltration



Combustion appliances
(Gas stoves)



Gas stoves



Cooking/
heating processes



Cleaning products



Paints



Consumer products



Furnishings



Building materials



Outdoor smoke



Infiltration into homes and buildings



Treated textiles



Carpets



Stain-resistant products



Cookware



Consumer products

OTHER POLLUTANTS OF CONCERN



Carbon Monoxide (CO)



Ozone (O₃)



Radon



SVOCs
(phthalates, flame retardants)



Lead & Legacy Contaminants



Cannabis Smoke



Vaping Aerosols



Microplastics



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Indoor Levels in California



Residential settings

~ **7–13**
 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$



Schools and childcare facilities

~ **18–19**
 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$



Most commercial settings

~ **7–36**
 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$



Vape shops
(highest observed)

up to 276
 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$



Key Takeaway

Many California indoor environments exceed WHO recommendations.



Benchmarks ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$)



World Health Organization (WHO)

15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
24-hour

5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
Annual



U.S. EPA NAAQS

35 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
24-hour

9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
Annual



Comparison with 2005 Report



$\text{PM}_{2.5}$ remains a **major indoor pollutant** of concern.



Cooking and **smoking/vaping** continue to be important indoor sources.



$\text{PM}_{2.5}$



Infiltration of Outdoor PM_{2.5}

1 Typical Infiltration Factors



Infiltration factors reported in North America and Europe ranged from **0.2–0.8**.



Most California studies reported infiltration factors between **0.2** and **0.5**.

i What is the Infiltration Factor (F_{inf})?

The infiltration factor is the fraction of outdoor PM_{2.5} that infiltrates a building and remains indoors over a certain period, excluding contributions from indoor sources.

- Range: 0 to 1
- Accounts for both pollutant penetration through the building envelope and removal processes indoors (e.g., deposition or filtration).

2 Wildfire Smoke Can Infiltrate Indoors

Northern California homes showed different infiltration factors depending on wildfire conditions.

During Fire Days

0.23



Behavioral changes, such as closing windows, can lower infiltration of outdoor PM_{2.5}.

Non-Fire Days

0.42

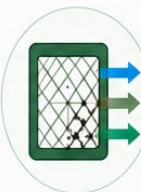


Under typical conditions, higher infiltration allows more outdoor PM_{2.5} to enter indoors.

3 Building Characteristics Matter



Newer, tighter buildings generally have lower infiltration.



Effective Ventilation and High-Efficiency Filtration are Essential for Reducing Indoor PM_{2.5}

MERV 13 or higher filters can significantly lower indoor particle levels, with MERV 16 filters reducing PM_{2.5} by up to 98% in supply ventilation systems.



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1

Gas Cooking Significantly Increases Indoor NO_2



Gas Cooking Homes
(Typical Conditions)



16–18 ppb

Typical indoor NO_2

Gas Cooking Homes
(During Cooking Events)



78–546 ppb

Peak indoor NO_2



Electric Cooking Homes



~7 ppb

Much lower indoor NO_2



Gas cooking is a major source of indoor NO_2 and can lead to high short-term exposures.

NO_2

2

Ventilation Reduces Exposure



Gas Cooking with Ventilation



18 ppb

Without ventilation



8 ppb

With ventilation

High-Performance Green Homes



~9 ppb

Relatively low indoor NO_2

Key Takeaway



Effective kitchen exhaust systems can substantially reduce occupant exposure.



Ventilation and building performance play a critical role in reducing indoor NO_2 exposure.

3

Health-Based Guidelines May Be Exceeded



1-Hour Health-Based Guidelines

U.S. EPA NAAQS
(ambient NO_2)



100 ppb

1-hour

Health Canada
(residential guideline)



170 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
(~90 ppb)
1-hour

World Health Organization
(WHO guideline)



200 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
(~106 ppb)
1-hour



Peak NO_2 levels during gas cooking exceeded these health-based benchmarks in some homes.



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1. Indoor Levels in California

Formaldehyde



5-68
 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

Benzene



0.2-5
 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

Acrolein



0.2-5
 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$



Exceedances Reported?



Formaldehyde: Yes



Benzene: Occasionally



Acrolein: Yes



2. Benchmarks (California OEHHA Chronic RELs*)

Formaldehyde

California OEHHA
Chronic REL

9
 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

Benzene

California OEHHA
Chronic REL

3
 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

Acrolein

California OEHHA
Chronic REL

0.35
 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$



OEHHA Chronic RELs are health-based exposure guidelines designed to protect sensitive populations during long-term exposure.



3. Comparison with 2005 Report



VOCs remain **important** indoor pollutants of concern.



Building materials, consumer products, and combustion activities remain **major sources**.



Since 2005, California has **strengthened formaldehyde** controls and **expanded** VOC regulations to **>130** consumer product categories.

VOCs



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Wildfire Smoke

WHY IT MATTERS



>7,400 wildfires annually in California (2020–2025), burning ~1.41 million acres/year.



In 2020, >4.5 million Californians were exposed to $PM_{2.5}$ >100 $\mu g/m^3$ for **at least one day** (21-fold increase vs. 2010).



People spend ~90% of their time indoors, making indoor exposure a major concern.

DURING ACTIVE WILDFIRES

SMOKE COMPOSITION



$PM_{2.5}$ (primary exposure indicator)



VOCs and hazardous air pollutants



Black carbon and organic aerosols



Heavy metals



Increasingly toxic emissions from WUI fires (homes, vehicles, and synthetic materials)

INDOOR EXPOSURE



- Smoke readily infiltrates buildings through ventilation, leaks, windows, and doors.
- Monitoring of >1,400 California buildings showed indoor $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations **tripled** during wildfire events.
- Portable HEPA filtration can reduce indoor $PM_{2.5}$ by ~50–80%.

POST-FIRE INDOOR CONTAMINATION



Exposure may continue after visible smoke dissipates.



VOCs, PAHs, and metals can persist indoors on surfaces, in dust, and in building materials.



Important knowledge gaps remain:

- Indoor persistence and re-emission
- Long-term exposure pathways
- Effective cleanup and remediation strategies



Future policies should support indoor environmental assessment and recovery following wildfire events.



1 Indoor Levels of PFAS in California and Other Settings

Setting Type (Study Location)	Sample	Mean Concentration Range* (Units)
 California residential and commercial carpet life cycle	PFAS emissions to air during carpet use	0.5 – 4.6 ng/m ²
	PFAS emissions to dust during carpet use	0.03 – 4.6 ng/m ²
 Residential homes in California (Northern and Central Valley)	Serum from children	4.46 – 6.28 ng/ml
	Serum from parents	1.86 – 4.73 ng/ml
	Serum from seniors	2.98 – 10.8 ng/ml
 Clothing stores (California)	Air samples	30 – 200 ng/m ³
 Childcare facilities (California)	Air samples	2 – 600 ng/m ³
	Carpet fibers	7.29 – 69.9 ng/g
 Childcare facilities	Dust	28.0 – 88.2 ng/g
	Dust	6.44 – 1440 ng/g
 Residential homes (North Carolina)	Dust	6.44 – 1440 ng/g
 Fire stations (U.S. and Canada)	Dust	216 – 760 ng/g

* Range reflect total PFAS unless otherwise noted.

2 Indoor Exposure Pathways



Inhalation

PFAS in indoor air and resuspended dust can be inhaled.



Ingestion

PFAS in indoor dust can be ingested hand-to-mouth.



Dermal Contact

PFAS can transfer through skin contact with treated materials and dust.



PFAS exposure is widespread and can occur at low levels in everyday indoor environments.

3 Key Points



PFAS are detected in both **indoor air and dust** across a **variety of indoor environments**, including homes, schools, retail spaces, and workplaces.



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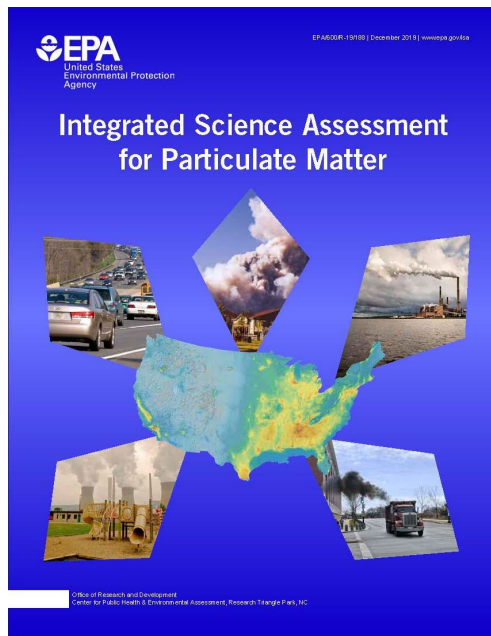


6 Pathway to Healthier IAQ



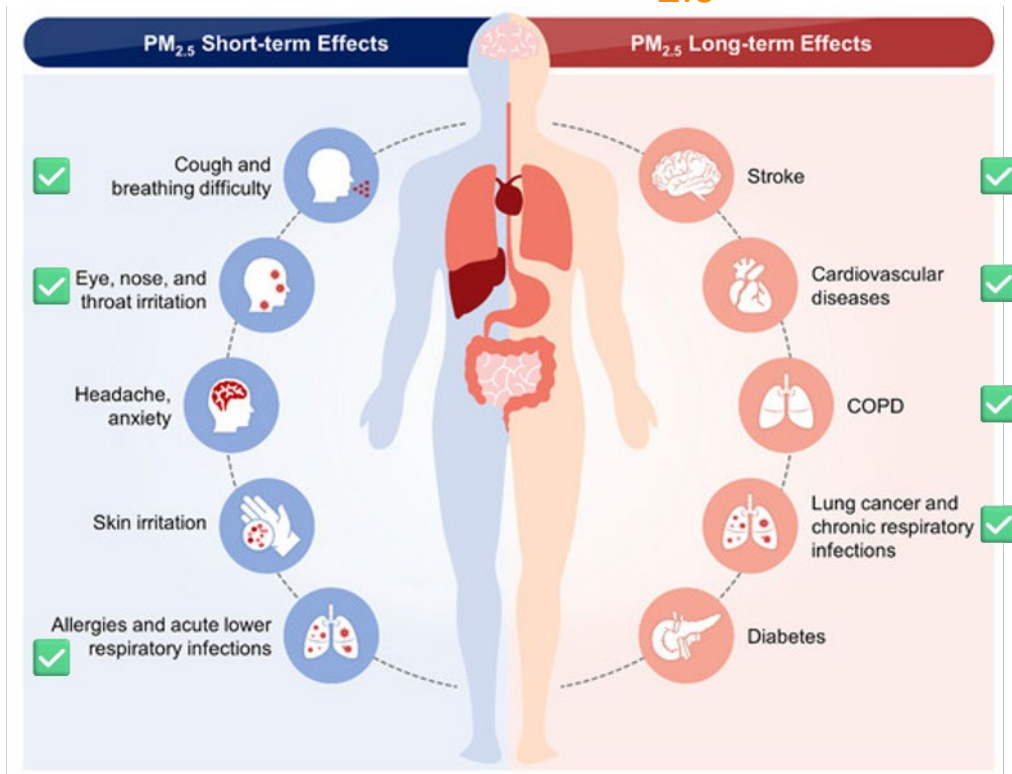
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The U.S. EPA's 2019 Integrated Science Assessment (ISA) for Particulate Matter Report



✓ Causal or likely to be causal

Ambient PM_{2.5}





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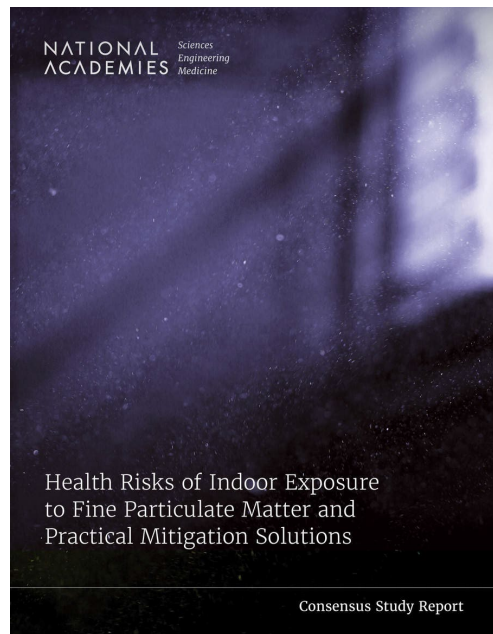
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The 2024 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) Report

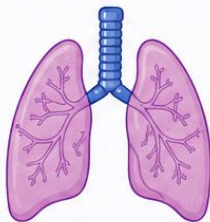
Indoor PM_{2.5}



Health Outcome	Evidence Strength
Respiratory effects (asthma, lung function decline, respiratory infection)	High
Cardiovascular effects (heart attack, cerebrovascular disease)	High
Neurological effects (cognitive decline, neurodevelopment)	Medium
Pregnancy & birth outcomes (preterm birth, low birth weight)	Medium
Cancer	Low



VOCs



RESPIRATORY EFFECTS

Irritation, oxidative stress, and inflammation of the airways can lead to:

- Coughing, wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath
- Asthma onset or exacerbation
- More severe asthma symptoms

Associated VOCs:

Benzene, Toluene, p-Dichlorobenzene, o-Xylene, m,p-Xylene, Ethylbenzene



LIVER EFFECTS

Disruption of lipid metabolism and lipid homeostasis

- ↓ Triglycerides & diacylglycerol
- ↑ Phosphatidic acid & phosphatidylcholine
- Potential compromise of liver function with chronic exposure

Associated VOCs:

Mixtures from decorative paints



NEUROLOGICAL EFFECTS

Effects on the central nervous system can cause:

- Nausea
- Tremors
- Headaches
- Dizziness

Associated VOCs:

Benzene, Toluene, Butadiene, and other VOCs



CANCER & DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTS

Linked to increased risks of:

- Leukemia (e.g., benzene, formaldehyde)
- Other cancers (e.g., nasopharyngeal cancer, squamous cell carcinoma, Hodgkin's lymphoma)
- Low birth weight from prenatal exposure

Associated VOCs:

Benzene, Butadiene, Formaldehyde, and other VOCs



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COMPLEX MIXTURE OF POLLUTANTS



PM_{2.5}
(Fine particles)



VOCs
(Volatile organic compounds)



PAHs
(Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons)



Heavy metals
(e.g., Pb, As, Cd, Hg)



Other toxicants
(e.g., dioxins, furans)

Wildfire-derived PM_{2.5} may cause more severe biological effects per unit mass than PM_{2.5} from other sources.

HEALTH EFFECTS ON MULTIPLE ORGAN SYSTEMS

1. RESPIRATORY & INFECTIOUS DISEASES



- Immediate respiratory symptoms (cough, wheeze, irritation)
- Exacerbation of asthma and COPD
- Increased hospitalizations and emergency visits
- Linked to infectious diseases (e.g., 23% ↑ in tuberculosis diagnoses when PM_{2.5} > 35 µg/m³)

2. CANCER RISKS & LONG-TERM EXPOSURE



- Repeated or chronic exposure increases cancer risk
- Linked to carcinogenic components (PAHs, heavy metals, dioxins, furans)
- Higher risks observed for populations living near wildfires over long periods
 - Lung cancer incidence (4.9% increase)
 - Brain tumor occurrence (10% increase)

3. MATERNAL & FETAL HEALTH



- Affects placental function through:
 - Oxidative stress
 - Inflammation
 - Endocrine disruption
 - Genomic instability
- Associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes (e.g., preterm birth, low birth weight)

4. NEUROINFLAMMATORY & IMMUNE DISRUPTION



- Short-term exposure can cause persistent neuroinflammation
- Microglial activation and changes in endothelial markers observed
- May increase vulnerability to neurodegenerative diseases and immune dysfunction

Wildfire Smoke



Susceptible Groups at Higher Risk from Indoor Air Pollution

1

Infants and Children



- Developing organs and immune systems
- Higher breathing rates per body weight
- Greater exposure from floor-level activities and hand-to-mouth behaviors

2

Pregnant and Perinatal People



- Increased absorption and physiological sensitivity
- Exposure can affect placental function and fetal development

3

Elderly Populations



- Age-related decline in lung and immune function
- Higher prevalence of chronic diseases
- Increased sensitivity to toxic exposures

4

People with Preexisting Health Conditions



Asthma or COPD Cardiovascular Disease Autoimmune Disorders Diabetes

- Immune dysregulation or weakened defenses
- Greater vulnerability to infections and neuroinflammatory impacts
- Certain medications may increase susceptibility to air pollutants



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Socioeconomic Drivers of Indoor Air Pollution Inequities



HOUSING CONDITIONS

- Older housing stock
- Multifamily / high-density housing
- Poor ventilation
- Legacy contaminants (lead, PCBs, PBDEs, etc.)



Low-income households and renters more likely to live in older, under-maintained housing.



NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT

- Proximity to highways and industrial facilities
- Outdoor air pollution infiltration
- Wildfire smoke



More likely to live in polluted neighborhoods with higher outdoor air pollution.



INDOOR SOURCES



- Gas stoves and cooking emissions
- Secondhand smoke
- Building materials, furnishings, cleaning products



Fewer resources to choose lower-emission products or upgrade appliances.



OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE



- Restaurant kitchen workers
- Nail salon workers
- Service-sector workers
- Vape shop workers



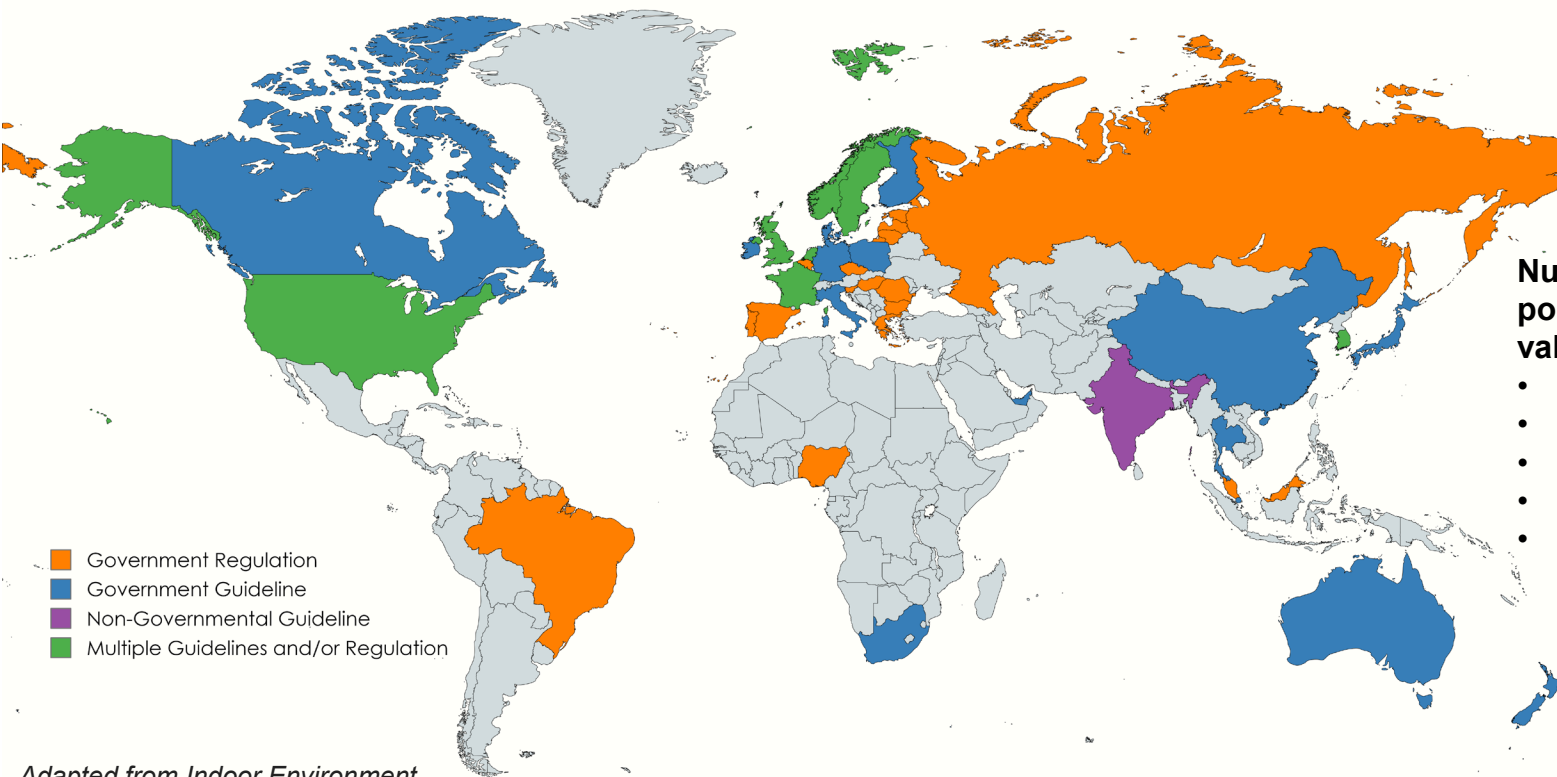
Low-wage workers often face elevated exposures in their workplaces.



GREATER HEALTH RISKS



38 Countries Established IAQ Guidelines

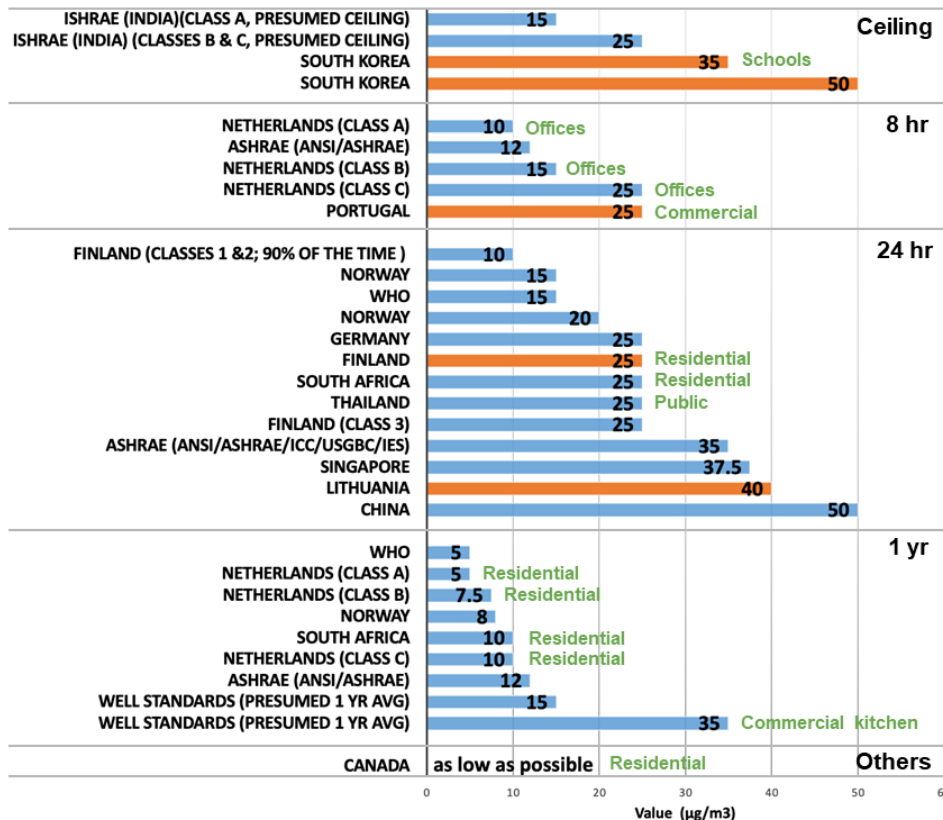


Number of indoor air pollutants with guideline values (examples)

- Germany: 56
- Canada: 30
- China: 20
- South Africa: 16
- New Zealand: 1 (CO₂ only)



Worldwide Indoor PM_{2.5} Guideline Limits



Regulations

Guidelines

CARB 2005 PM_{2.5} Recommendation:
65 µg/m³ (24-hour average)

This recommendation is now considered outdated, and California is currently evaluating updated health-based guideline values.



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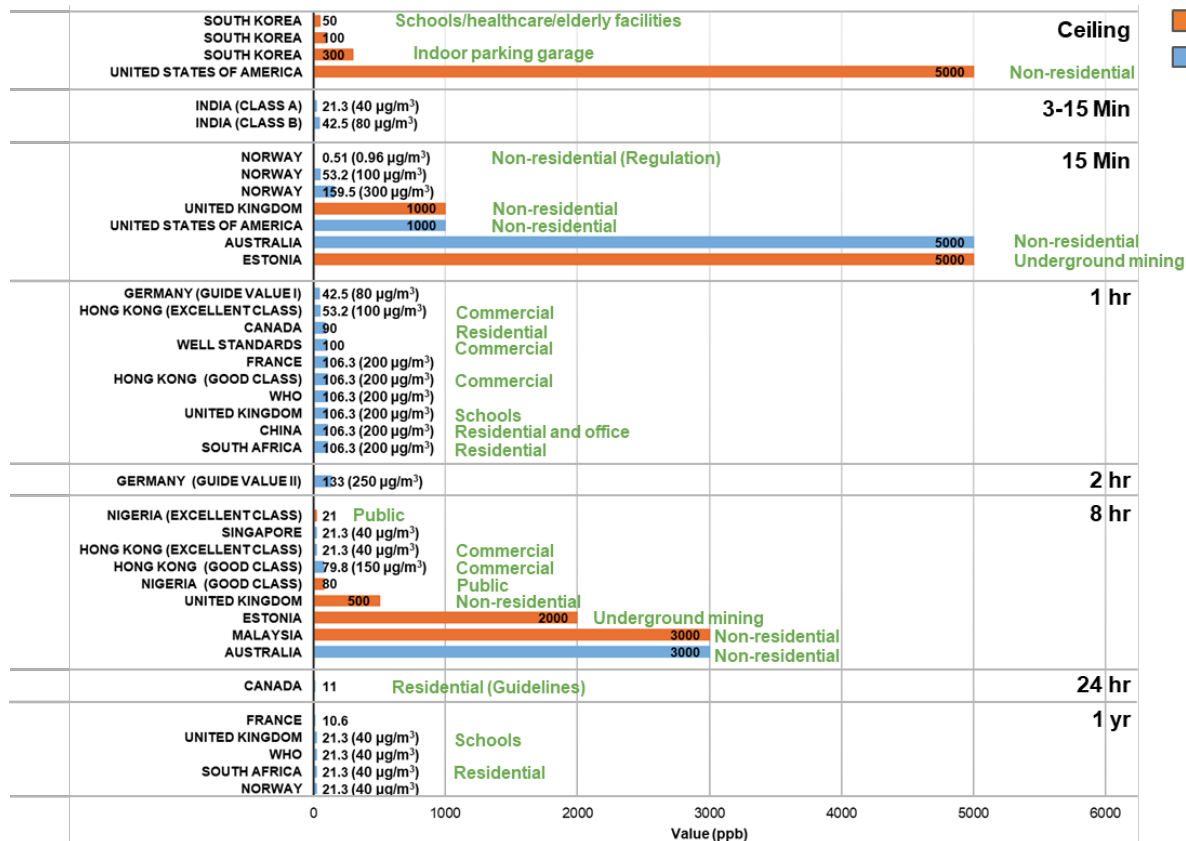


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Worldwide Indoor NO₂ Guideline Limits



CARB 2005 NO₂ Recommendation:
 250 ppb (1-hour average)
 80 ppb (24-hour average)

This recommendation is now considered outdated, and California is currently evaluating updated health-based guideline values.



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Agency / Organization



Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)



National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)



American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH®)



Guidelines, Standards, or Key Documents

- **Indoor Radon Abatement Act (1988)**
- Residences and Schools
- Radon

Indoor Air Quality in Commercial and Institutional Buildings (2011)

- **Act:** Occupational Safety and Health Act (1970)
- **Standards:** 1910.94 (Ventilation) • 1910.1000 (Air Contaminants) • 1910.1001 (Asbestos) • 1910.1048 (Formaldehyde) • 1910.1096 (Radon)
- **PELs:** Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs) for workplace contaminants
- **Alternatives:** Cal/OSHA, NIOSH, ACGIH

- **NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards (2007)**

- **Threshold Limit Values (TLVs®) and Biological Exposure Indices (BEIs®)**
- Guidelines • Periodically updating • Copyrighted



Example:
Indoor NO₂
Exposure Limits

Example	OSHA	Cal/OSHA	NIOSH
NO ₂	5 ppm Ceiling	1 ppm 15 min	1 ppm 15 min

US Federal Regulatory Framework for IAQ



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State Agency

Guidelines, Standards, or Documents and Pollutants Addressed



IDPH
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH
**Illinois Department
of Public Health**

Guidelines for IAQ (2011)

Relative Humidity (RH), Temperature, Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S), Ozone (O₃), PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, Formaldehyde, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Tobacco Smoke, Radon



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services
**Texas Department
of Health**

Voluntary IAQ Guidelines for Government Buildings (2002)

Relative Humidity (RH), Temperature, Air Velocity, Asbestos, Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ozone (O₃), PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, Formaldehyde, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂), Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S), Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), Tobacco Smoke, Lead, Mercury, Radon, Allergens, Fungi, Legionella, Pesticides



NJHealth
New Jersey Department of Health
**New Jersey
Department of Health**

IAQ Standard for Public Employees (2007)

Temperature, Carbon Dioxide (CO₂)



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
**Pennsylvania
Department of Health**

IAQ Guidelines for Pennsylvania Schools (1999)

Carbon Monoxide (CO), Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Pesticides, Radon, Mercury, Lead, Biological Agents, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

IAQ Guidelines & Standards & from Other States



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2 Priority Pollutants



3 Health Effects



4 Vulnerable Groups



5 Regulatory Framework



6 Pathway to Healthier IAQ



7 Future Priorities

California Regulatory Framework for IAQ

Agency / Program



CARB

California Air Resources Board



CEC / Title 24 Part 6

California Energy Commission



CALGreen (Title 24 Part 11)

California Green Building Standards Code



OEHHA

OEHHA

California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment



Cal/OSHA & CDPH

California Division of Occupational Safety and Health & California Department of Public Health

Primary IAQ Role



Consumer product VOC regulations; formaldehyde ATCM; ozone limits for air cleaners; indoor air pollutant guidelines



Ventilation, filtration, kitchen exhaust, energy code requirements



Low-emitting materials, moisture control, construction IAQ practices



Reference Exposure Levels (RELs), Proposition 65



Workplace exposure standards; schools and public health guidance



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2008–Present



Residential Mechanical Ventilation Requirements

California Energy Code (Title 24)

Ensures minimum outdoor air exchange in new homes, improving IAQ in increasingly airtight buildings.

2022
(Title 24)

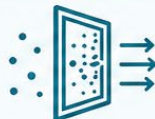


Stronger Kitchen Range Hood Standards

California Energy Code (Title 24)

Requires health-based airflow and capture efficiency for range hoods, reducing cooking-related PM_{2.5} and NO₂.

2022–2025 Updates



MERV 13 Filtration Requirements

California Energy Code (Title 24)

Higher filtration in buildings and during construction improves protection from outdoor PM_{2.5} and wildfire smoke.

2007



Formaldehyde Limits for Composite Wood Products

CARB Airborne Toxic Control Measure (ATCM) for Formaldehyde

Reduces formaldehyde emissions from wood products, lowering indoor formaldehyde exposure.

2005–Present



Expanded Consumer Product VOC Regulations

CARB Consumer Product Regulations (130+ product categories)

Significantly reduces VOC emissions from consumer products used daily in homes and workplaces.

2008



California Air Cleaner Regulation

California Air Resources Board

Limits ozone emissions from indoor air cleaning devices and requires CARB certification for air cleaners sold in California.

Major Progress Since 2005



Source Control

Reduce or eliminate pollutants at their source to prevent them from entering the indoor environment

1 Zero-emission appliances



- Replace fossil fuel combustion appliances with zero-emission alternatives.
- Zero-emission alternatives reduce combustion-related emissions, including NO₂, CO, benzene, and PM_{2.5}.
- However, cooking activities can still generate PM_{2.5}, ultrafine particles (UFPs), and VOCs, regardless of appliance type; effective ventilation remains essential.

↓ NO₂, CO, benzene, PM_{2.5}

2 Use Low-Emission Materials



- Replace older furniture and materials that emit formaldehyde, VOCs, PFAS, and flame retardants.

↓ VOCs, SVOCs, and long-term chemical exposures



3 Eliminate Indoor Smoking & Vaping



- Restrict tobacco, cannabis, and e-cigarette use indoors.
- In multifamily housing, smoke and aerosols can migrate between units, exposing neighboring residents.

↓ PM_{2.5}, VOCs, ultrafine particles, toxic air contaminants

4 Supplemental Source Reduction Strategies



Choose low-emission cleaning products, reduce fragranced products, and maintain combustion appliances.

↓ VOCs and other indoor-generated pollutants

[CARB resources on how to reduce your exposure to indoor air pollution](#)



Pollutant Capture & Removal

Remove pollutants from indoor air through effective ventilation and filtration

[List of CARB-Certified Air Cleaning Devices](#)



1 Kitchen Exhaust & Range Hoods

- Use vented range hoods during cooking to remove PM_{2.5}, NO₂, VOCs, and UFP near the source.



2 Wildfire Smoke Protection

- Create a designated "clean room" with a portable HEPA air cleaner during smoke events.
- Keep windows and doors closed when outdoor air quality is poor.



3 Cleaner Air During School Transportation

- High-efficiency cabin air filtration can substantially reduce students' exposure to traffic-related PM_{2.5}, black carbon, and ultrafine particles.



4 Air Filtration in Homes & Schools

- Upgrade HVAC filters (MERV-13+) and use portable HEPA air cleaners to reduce indoor particles.
- Schools and childcare facilities can benefit substantially from enhanced filtration.



MERV 8



- ✓ Captures larger particles
- ✓ Basic filtration
- ✓ Lower cost

MERV 13



- ✓ Captures smaller particles
- ✓ Better for allergies
- ✓ Higher cost



Dilution, Ventilation, and Building Design

Proper ventilation and high-performance building design work together to dilute indoor pollutants, minimize outdoor contamination, and create healthier indoor environments



1 Residential Ventilation & Air Exchange

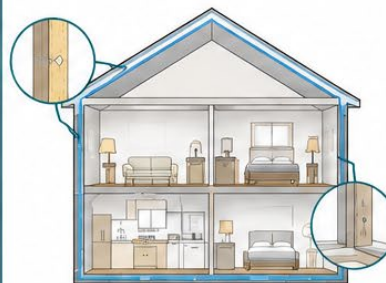
- Mechanical ventilation systems dilute pollutants from cooking, cleaning products, furnishings, and occupants.
- Open windows when outdoor air quality is good; reduce outdoor air intake during wildfire smoke events.



2 Building Airtightness & High-Performance Design

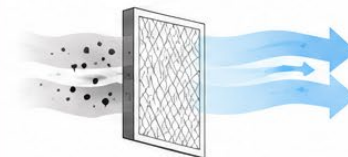
- Airtight building envelopes reduce infiltration of wildfire smoke, traffic pollution, and other outdoor contaminants.
- MERV-13+ filtration can substantially reduce particle infiltration; MERV-16 filters have achieved up to 98% $PM_{2.5}$ reduction.

Airtight Building Envelope



Sealed gaps and high-performance materials reduce unwanted air infiltration.

High-Efficiency Filtration



MERV 13+

- ✓ Reduces particle infiltration
- ✓ Improves indoor air quality

MERV 16

- ✓ Up to 98% $PM_{2.5}$ reduction
- ✓ Highest particle removal efficiency



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Future Research Priorities

1 Long-term (> 6-month) indoor monitoring

across seasons, housing types, and climate regions



Spring



Summer



Fall



Winter



Single-family Homes



Multifamily Housing



Mobile/Manufactured Homes



Rural Homes

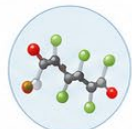


Capture seasonal and regional variability in exposures

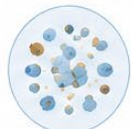


3 Improve understanding of emerging pollutants

(PFAS, microplastics, cannabis smoke, wildfire residues, post-fire off-gassing)



PFAS



Microplastics



Cannabis Smoke



Wildfire Residues



Post-fire Off-gassing

Identify sources, characterize exposures, and assess health impacts.

2 Developing robust low-cost air sensors

Advance accurate, reliable, and affordable sensors for widespread IAQ monitoring and equity-focused applications.



Low-cost sensors



Data transmission



Data analytics & validation



Actionable insights

4 Evaluate real-world effectiveness of mitigation technologies and behavioral interventions



Technologies (e.g., air purifiers, ventilation)



Behaviors (e.g., window use, cooking practices)



Real-world performance & acceptability



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Future Policy Priorities

- 1** Develop comprehensive statewide IAQ performance guidelines



Establish science-based, enforceable IAQ standards for homes, buildings, and communities across California.

- 2** Strengthen ventilation, filtration, and low-emission material requirements in buildings



Ensure adequate ventilation, high-efficiency filtration, and low-emission materials in new construction and retrofits.

- 3** Integrate IAQ into housing, climate resilience, public health, and energy policies



Embed IAQ considerations across interconnected policy areas for co-benefits and resilient communities.

- 4** Support post-wildfire indoor environmental assessment and recovery guidance



Develop clear guidance and resources for indoor air assessment, cleanup, and safe re-occupancy after wildfires.

- 5** Prioritize vulnerable populations, including children, older adults, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions



Ensure policies and programs address the greater risks and unique needs of those most susceptible to poor IAQ.

- 6** Expand access to filtration, ventilation upgrades, and appliance replacement programs



Invest in incentive and rebate programs that make healthy indoor air solutions affordable and accessible.

- 7** Address barriers faced by renters, low-income households, and disadvantaged communities



Remove structural, financial, and policy barriers to ensure equitable IAQ protections for all communities.

- 8** Improve risk communication, community engagement, and culturally appropriate outreach



Build trust and empower communities through clear messaging, two-way engagement, and culturally relevant materials and channels.

Key Takeaways

WHY IT MATTERS

Californians Spend
~87% Time Indoors



Indoor air pollutant levels
are often higher than
those outdoors

RESEARCH APPROACH

1

Literature
Review



Over 700 Papers

2

Interviews



32 Community
Members

3

Public
Workshop



40 Participants

PRIORITY INDOOR AIR POLLUTANTS

TRADITIONAL

EMERGING



PM_{2.5}



Wildfires



PFAS
"forever
chemicals"

HEALTH IMPACTS



Respiratory



Cardiovascular



Neurological

VULNERABLE & SUSCEPTIBLE GROUPS



Pregnant



Existing Conditions



Seniors



Children



Minority



Low-Income

MITIGATION STRATEGIES



Control
Emission
Sources

Improve
Ventilation
& Filtration



Increase Education
& Awareness

GUIDELINES & REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Global



From over 50 international
governments & entities

United
States



ASHRAE (Ventilation Std.)
OSHA/NIOSH (Workplace Limit)
Selected States (IL, PA, TX)

California



CARB (Emission Regulations)
CEC (Title 24 Bldg. Codes)
OEHHA (Ref. Exposure Lvl.)

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Thank You
