



## Frequently Asked Questions

To click any of the hyperlinks in this document, select “CTRL (or Command)” then click.

### 1. How do I sign up for the AirAware Alerts?

- To sign up, simply visit our website at [SLOCleanAir.org](http://SLOCleanAir.org). On the homepage, you will see blue “quick link” buttons. Click the AirAware Alerts button and follow the instructions on the next page. If you have any questions or need help getting your mobile device signed up, call us at 805-781-1003.

### 2. What phone number will the text alerts be coming from?

- All alerts will come from the phone number 805-250-4188. Your privacy is very important to us; we will not spam, sell or otherwise provide your phone number to any third party.

### 3. What do the different alert notifications mean?

- Early Alert for Blowing Dust on the Nipomo Mesa: These alerts are sent whenever either the CDF and/or Mesa 2 Nipomo monitor registers an hourly PM10 concentration above certain thresholds between the hours 9 and 4 pm standard time (or 10 am and 5 pm during daylight savings time). The threshold for triggering an alert depends on the hour and the site. A measured PM10 value exceeding a threshold indicates a blowing dust event is underway and the California PM10 standard will likely be violated that day. CDF and Mesa 2 are the most reliable indicator stations of regional blowing dust. See the table below for the hourly threshold table:

HOURLY	CDF	MESA 2
9	172	68
10	82	68
11	211	62
12	132	96
13	149	114
14	308	196
15	279	336
16	315	900

- All APCD Press Releases: APCD issues Press Releases for various topics throughout the year, including Better Breather Alerts for Blowing Dust, prescribed burn notices, announcements of events like Bike Month or Earth Day, and other things of public interest. These Press Releases are then posted on our [website](#). If you would like to be informed when there is a new press release available, please sign up for this notification.
- Air Quality Index is “Unhealthy”: “Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups” corresponds to an Air Quality Index (AQI) value between 101 and 150. This is represented by an “orange” color code that indicates anyone exposed to air quality conditions in that AQI range could experience adverse health effects, with members of the most sensitive population groups (older adults, children, those with pre-existing medical conditions) being most susceptible to serious health effects from exposure to elevated air pollution conditions. To see a description of all the Air Quality Index codes and search the AQI for your zip code, visit the [AirNow](#) website.

- Wildfire Smoke Impacts: Should there be a wildfire or prescribed burn and our local monitors register impacts countywide or to a specific region within the county, these users will be notified.
- AirAlerts en Español: By selecting this notification option, users will be sent all alerts in Spanish.

**4. What is the difference between an “Early Alert for Blowing Dust” and a “Better Breather Alert for Blowing Dust?”**

- CDF and/or Mesa 2 Nipomo monitor registers an hourly PM10 concentration above certain thresholds between the hours 9 and 4 pm standard time (or 10 am and 5 pm during daylight savings time). The threshold for triggering an alert depends on the hour and the site. A measured PM10 value exceeding a threshold indicates a blowing dust event is underway and the California PM10 standard will likely be violated that day. A Better Breather Alert for Blowing Dust is issued as a general press release and to impacted area schools and individual subscribers whenever any Nipomo area monitor registers an hourly PM<sub>10</sub> concentration above 300 ug/m<sup>3</sup>.

**5. How has the SLO County APCD refined the alert for blowing dust over time?**

- Initially, when the AirAware text alert system was developed, alerts were triggered whenever the CDF PM10 monitor registered a concentration over 175 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. Later, the timing was restricted so that alerts could only be issued when the concentration exceeded this level between 9 am and 4 pm PST, meaning alerts would be sent out between 10 am and 5 pm PST (11 am and 6 pm daylight saving time.) This was because dust events never occur overnight or in the early morning and to prevent subscribers from receiving alerts overnight or in the early morning. In February 2019, the trigger was refined again so alerts were sent whenever the CDF monitor registered an hourly PM10 concentration above 195 ug/m<sup>3</sup> OR when the cumulative sum of PM10 is greater than 920 ug/m<sup>3</sup> between the hours of 9:00am and 4 pm PST. This change improved the overall accuracy of the alerts. In July of 2021, the newest algorithm, described above, was implemented. With high concentrations at either Mesa2 or CDF being able to trigger an alert and with a time-varying threshold, the latest algorithm is very accurate and sends out alerts more than an hour earlier, on average, than the previous algorithm.

**6. How many alerts should I expect to receive?**

- If you sign up for our “Early Alert for Blowing Dust” there is a likelihood that on high wind days, you could be receiving a text message every hour during the dust event.

**7. I just received an alert to my phone, how do I access the full Press Release that was just issued?**

- All Press Releases and Media Alerts that are issued by the SLO County Air Pollution Control District can be found on our [website](#).

**8. How can I access hourly data?**

- The hourly data, specific to each monitoring station can be found on our website; [click here](#) to view.

**9. Will I start getting text alerts right away?**

- Please be aware that it may take up to 1 business day for changes to our messaging list to take effect.

**10. How can I stop getting text alerts?**

- For users that have signed up for these text notifications, you can reply STOP when a notification is received. Should there be an issue and you continue to get alerts when you have indicated you would like to unsubscribe, please call 805-781-1003 and we will assist in removing your number from our log.

**11. Are text messages sent 7 days a week?**

- The Early Alert for Blowing Dust is the only notification that is an automated alert. The others are manually entered and are triggered by press releases issued Monday through Friday.

**12. Are these alerts available in Spanish?**

- Yes. All of our alerts are translated to Spanish. We have a specific list-serve you can sign up for indicating you would like to receive alerts in Spanish. [Click here](#) to sign up.