



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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Weekly Update on Mon Valley Air Quality, Status of Clairton Coke Works

PITTSBURGH – As part of the Allegheny County Health Department's (ACHD) commitment to providing the public additional information related to air quality in the Mon Valley, and the status of the Clairton Coke Works, Dr. Karen Hacker provided the following from this past week:

There have not been any SO₂ exceedances in the Mon Valley since the 4 a.m. hour on January 8, 2019. At this time, there is no need to take any specific precautions, but residents, especially sensitive populations, should continue to be aware of the potential for SO₂ exceedances until repairs at US Steel's Clairton Coke Works are complete.

The Health Department will be adding three monitors to its current system:

The first monitor, measuring SO₂, has been installed at the Clairton Education Center and will allow ACHD to better assess any unusual SO₂ issues and could potentially provide different data than is currently available from the two other monitors in the area. Hourly data is available on the [website](#) (designated as the Clairton monitor). Any exceedances reflected at this monitor will be included in ACHD's daily SO₂ update.

The second monitor, also measuring SO₂, will be located in an area near US Steel's Irvin Works where coke oven gas is being flared. The department is working on determining the best location for the monitor, but installation is expected in the coming weeks. Once online, the monitor's data will also be available on the ACHD website.

The third monitor, measuring benzene, is planned for installation near the Irvin Works plant to assess risk to nearby residents. The department is working on determining the best location.

Our air quality inspectors are continuing to monitor repair progress at the Clairton Coke Works on a daily basis. US Steel is now publicly sharing those updates on their own site as well: <http://www.clairton.uss.com>.

ACHD air program officials observed upticks, but **no exceedances**, in both SO₂ and PM 2.5 readings at the Liberty and North Braddock monitors on Wednesday, January 23. Air quality inspectors at the plant did not observe anything out of the ordinary, and Clairton Coke Works plant managers also did not report any unusual activity during this time. ACHD staff also asked for a review of their operations to ensure that nothing out of the ordinary was done to cause increases in the readings. The higher than normal readings were likely due to poor air dispersion which traps pollutants close to the ground.

ACHD is also working with pediatricians in the Mon Valley area to answer questions related to the fire at the Clairton Coke Works and its potential impact. Department staff communicated with school nurses and pediatricians in affected communities regarding the post-fire situation and potential health impacts, similar to what was done in its public alert on January 9.

As has been the case, the Health Department will continue to provide a daily 3 p.m. posting about the monitored data on SO₂ from the prior 24-hour period. Those updates are being posted on the department's [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page, as well as being sent to subscribers of [Allegheny Alerts](#).

Anyone experiencing health issues related to this incident should contact their primary care provider as soon as possible. In case of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 or go to the emergency room. Health concerns should also be

reported to the Health Department by calling 412-687-ACHD (412-687-2243), or submitting information through the [online contact form](#).

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