

# DOMINGUEZ CHANNEL ODOR EVENT

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**TOPLINE MESSAGE:** Los Angeles County officials have been working collaboratively since Oct. 6 to investigate and address the pungent odor affecting communities in the area of Dominguez Channel in the City of Carson.

Multiple agencies are responding to this incident to provide relief to the residents and businesses that have been affected.

- LA County Public Works, LA County Department of Public Health, LA County Fire Health Hazmat, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD)

The County's top priority is the safety and wellbeing of the public, and we are bringing all available resources to bear to alleviate this issue.

It's important for you to know that your health and sense of wellbeing are very important to us.

The County is working around the clock to alleviate the source of the smell and provide you and your neighbors relief from its effects.

An influx of community odor reports came into AQMD on Oct. 6. Since then, LA County and its partner agencies have worked around the clock to alleviate the source of the smell and provide communities with relief.

If you believe you have been affected by odors coming from the Dominguez Channel or have questions about this incident, **call the County's 2-1-1 Helpline** for information.

The latest information on this event can be found at **[lacounty.gov/emergency/dominguez-channel](https://lacounty.gov/emergency/dominguez-channel)**.

Follow LA County Public Works and Public Health social media sites for updates.

## INCIDENT OBJECTIVES

1. Work with response agencies to ensure the life and safety of residents due to the odor emanating from the Dominguez Channel.

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2. Investigate the Channel to identify and pursue options to remediate the odor issue in the Channel and develop solutions to eliminate it.
3. Implement measures to help alleviate or remediate community impacts from the odor issue in the Channel.

## BACKGROUND

- Air quality sampling has found elevated levels of hydrogen sulfide in the air. Decomposing organic material within the Dominguez Channel appears to be the source.
  - Dominguez Channel is 15 miles long and provides drainage and flood protection for a watershed of approximately 70,000 acres. It discharges into the Los Angeles Harbor

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

- When ocean tides recede within the riverbed, decomposing organic material is exposed to the air.
- The decomposing material releases a natural chemical known as **hydrogen sulfide**, which has a smell of Sulphur or rotten eggs.
- Hydrogen sulfide creates an odor that can cause short-term, reversible symptoms that include headaches, nausea, or eye, nose, and throat irritation.
- A special team of scientists and engineers is working to develop solutions to address this natural phenomenon, alleviate the smell and restore the channel to a healthy estuary.
- The County's Health Officer has determined that ongoing odors are pervasive enough to be considered a public nuisance to residents and those working and recreating nearby.

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- If you experience worrisome or lingering symptoms related to odors, please contact your medical care provider.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS** (Updated: 10/23/2021)

While the effort to get rid of the odor continues, Public Health recommends you consider taking the following actions to lessen symptoms and protect the health of you, your family, and your pets:

1. If symptoms feel life-threatening, seek immediate medical care.
2. If symptoms are persistent, worrisome, or worsening, seek medical attention. Relocate to another area until odors go away. For assistance, call 2-1-1.
3. Avoid prolonged outdoor activities between the hours of 9 p.m. through 8 a.m., based on patterns seen with South Coast AQMD air monitoring results, and whenever odors are strong to reduce your exposure.
4. Keep doors and windows closed as much as possible to prevent outdoor odors from entering your residence or business. Air out your home/business when odors are not present.
5. If you have a central heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system, contact an air conditioning specialist, if needed, to determine if the air filters in your system may be replaced with High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) or MERV-rated filters with activated charcoal (carbon) to improve the air quality inside.

If you notice odors are stronger or symptoms are worse in the late evening or early morning hours (9 p.m. to 7 a.m.), try running your central HVAC system throughout the night, if you have not already. Temporarily relocating may be best if this does not help.

6. Use a certified portable HEPA indoor air filter with activated charcoal to improve air quality in your home. [Click here](#) to see some examples of portable HEPA indoor air filters with activated carbon.

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7. If you notice odors are stronger or symptoms are worse in the late evening or early morning hours (9 p.m. to 7 a.m.), try running your portable indoor air filter throughout the night, if you have not already. Temporarily relocating may be best if this does not help. [Filter recommendations](#) from Public Health.
8. Keep pets indoors. If you notice any of the following in your pets, please contact your local veterinarian: difficulty breathing, vomiting, lethargy, or nausea.

People experiencing persistent, worrisome, or worsening symptoms from the odors are encouraged to contact their health care providers, especially if they have any chronic health conditions. People should also ensure that they have adequate supplies of their medications, especially if they have heart or lung conditions. In addition, Public Health recommends temporarily.

## AIR QUALITY MONITORING

AQMD continues monitoring the air quality and reporting levels detected. County Public Health, in consultation with AQMD, County Fire Health HazMat, and state and federal advisers, continues to evaluate and monitor the hydrogen sulfide levels reported and the actions recommended for the public and businesses to mitigate and prevent any health impacts.

The results of air monitoring can be found on the AQMD's webpage for the Dominguez Channel Odor Event on their homepage at [aqmd.gov](http://aqmd.gov).

## ODOR SOLUTIONS

- Restoring the channel to a healthy estuary is a multi-step process.
- To eliminate the odor, County Public Works is applying the biodegradable odor neutralizer **Epoleon** via spray or drip into the channel.

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- Epoleon is a water-based product comprised of all-natural, non-toxic and biodegradable compounds.
- Initial use of this solution began on Oct.15 and continued Oct. 19, to coincide with incoming tides to further spread the product throughout the channel.
- At this time, approximately 3,500 gallons of Epoleon solution are applied each day at five locations along the channel.
- A system of 12 aeration devices will be used over a three-month period to inject nanobubbles, millions of tiny bubbles, to increase the dissolved oxygen levels in the channel.
- The system became operational on Oct. 19.
- Residents should be able to detect a noticeable difference as treatments take effect.

The bacteria behind the odors are more active at night but sensitive to light. Public Works placed two light standards along the channel north of Avalon Blvd. to test whether this would make the bacteria less active.

## DOMINGUEZ CHANNEL BIKE PATH

The Dominguez Channel Bike Path was closed Oct. 19 between Main Street and 190<sup>th</sup> Street until further notice, due to responding equipment accessing the pathway.

## REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

Residents and businesses that have been affected by the odor from Dominguez Channel may seek relief through the [County's reimbursement program](#).

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**Assistance is available in three options from October 4-28, 2021, unless extended in writing by Los Angeles County Public Works.**

**Option 1** - For homes with heating and air conditioning systems, the County will reimburse for filter inserts that are HEPA rated with activated carbon or other filters recommended by the County Department of Public Health.

The limit of reimbursement will be \$60 per unit per household. Receipts are required for reimbursement within 21 days of purchase.

**Option 2** - The County will reimburse households for HEPA filtration system air purifier units that use activated carbon, or other filtration system recommended by the County Department of Public Health, if they don't already have them.

The limit of reimbursement is \$400 per household for homes 1,000 square feet or smaller and \$800 per household for homes above 1,000 square feet. Receipts are required for reimbursement within 21 days of purchase.

**Option 3** - The County will reimburse the household for one hotel room in Los Angeles County, up to \$182 per day, and hotel self-parking for one vehicle per day.

Applications are received on a per household basis. The application asks for the name of each person currently residing full-time in a household who are intending to temporarily relocate.

Meals, groceries, and miscellaneous expenses are reimbursed at the rate of \$66 per day for each person currently residing full time in the household who has been relocated to the hotel.

Receipts will be required for the hotel and parking, but not for meals, groceries, or incidentals. This offer is valid from October 4, 2021 through October 28, 2021 (for hotel checkout the morning of October 29, 2021).

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Additional option (new): Residents may submit a second application for a different option (HVAC filters, air purifier, or hotel accommodation) than the one already provided.

The deadline for reimbursement programs is extended to October 28.

- **Contact 2-1-1 Helpline for assistance with submitting a request for reimbursement.**

## CONTACT US

- The Public Works Community Outreach Vehicle is onsite seven-days a week at the **Carson Community Center, from 7:00a.m. – 7:30p.m.**, to answer health questions and assist residents and businesses with the reimbursement process. 801 East Carson St. (east parking lot)
- If you notice “rotten egg” or “sulfur” odors, you can report them to AQMD at [www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/complaints](http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/complaints) or by telephone at **1-800-CUTSMOG (1-800-288-7664)**.
- **Contact 211 Helpline for assistance with submitting a request for reimbursement or general information on this event.**
- You can also call the LA County Public Works 24/7 hotline at 800-675-HELP (4357) or visit the website at [pw.lacounty.gov](http://pw.lacounty.gov).

## PIO RESOURCES

**Link to incident images and b-roll:**

<https://pwlacounty.canto.com/b/G7522>