



# NEWS

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## **Air District settles case with Valero**

*Refinery to pay \$183,000 for air quality violations*

**SAN FRANCISCO** - The Bay Area Air Quality Management District announced that Valero Refining Company has agreed to pay a \$183,000 civil penalty to settle air quality violations at its refinery in Benicia.

The settlement covers seven notices of violation that the Air District issued to Valero in 2011 for incidents that occurred in December of 2010.

“The Air District is responsible for ensuring that all businesses in the Bay Area operate in full compliance with federal, state and local air quality regulations in order to safeguard public health in the region,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “The Air District takes this responsibility seriously and will take action when any violations are discovered.”

All of the Valero violations were related to a December 2010 upset of Valero’s fluid catalytic cracking unit, which converts heavy gas oils into gasoline and other lighter compounds. The upset was caused by a valve failure and occurred at the same time that electrostatic precipitators controlling particulate emissions were working at reduced efficiency.

The upset resulted in intermittent violations of opacity and particulate standards at Valero’s main stack over a ten-day period, as well as violations of carbon monoxide and sulfur standards at other affected equipment.

The Air District issues Notices of Violation to inform facilities that they have violated a specific air quality regulation or rule. Violators are generally required to respond to the notice within ten days and submit a description of the actions they will take to correct the problem. These actions can include shutting down operations immediately, or changing operations or equipment to come into compliance.

All settlement funds will be used to fund Air District activities such as the inspection and enforcement activities that led to this settlement.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District ([www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area.

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