



## Marathon Oil Refinery Odor - February 5, 2019 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

In response to the Marathon Oil Refinery odor noted on February 1 and February 2, 2019, the Detroit Health Department is providing information about the issue and what residents should know. The City of Detroit Building, Safety, Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED) and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) have performed air monitoring on and around the facility, and to date have not found any elevations in toxic substances that would pose a health and safety risk. We will continue to update these FAQs as more information is shared.

**To report any strong environmental odors in your neighborhood, or if you have questions, please contact the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality at 800-292-4706.**

### Can environmental odors make me sick?

Everyone reacts to odors differently. Some people are more sensitive to odors than others. When you are more sensitive to an odor, you may have symptoms or feel ill even at a low level of the odor in the air. In general, as levels increase or the longer a person is exposed to an odor, symptoms may also increase.

Young children, the elderly, and pregnant women may be more sensitive to odors. In general, the most common symptoms are:

- Headaches
- Nasal congestion
- Eye, nose, and throat irritation
- Nausea
- Hoarseness, sore throat
- Cough
- Chest tightness
- Drowsiness
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Heart palpitations
- Mental depression

These symptoms generally occur at the time of exposure. Their intensity will depend on the amount of the odor in the air, how often you smell it, and how long exposure lasts. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, please contact your health care provider.

### Are all environmental odors toxic?

No. Toxicity is the degree to which a substance (a toxin) can harm humans or animals. If a substance level in the air is high, happens often, and lasts a long time, the odor can become toxic and cause adverse health effects. If those conditions do not exist, odors are generally not toxic. If you are sensitive to environmental odors, you may react to low amounts of a substance in the air. The length of exposure is important whether you are sensitive or not.

### What can I do if environmental odors are in the air?

Try to keep outdoor odors from entering your home. When outdoor odors are noticeable, close your windows. Set your heating, air conditioning and ventilation system so that it recirculates the indoor air and does not draw in outdoor air. If you have asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, using your inhaler can help. If you are experiencing any severe symptoms, please contact your health care provider.

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*Michael E. Duggan, Mayor*