

What are Air Quality Standards?

Air quality standards are concentrations of a pollutant in the air that must be met outside the property line of industrial and commercial facilities that emit substances to the air. They are developed by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment based on the best scientific information available and are set at levels to protect the health of sensitive people, including children and the elderly, as well as the natural environment.

Air quality standards are set on a pollutant by pollutant basis and correspond to a certain time interval (typically 24 hours).

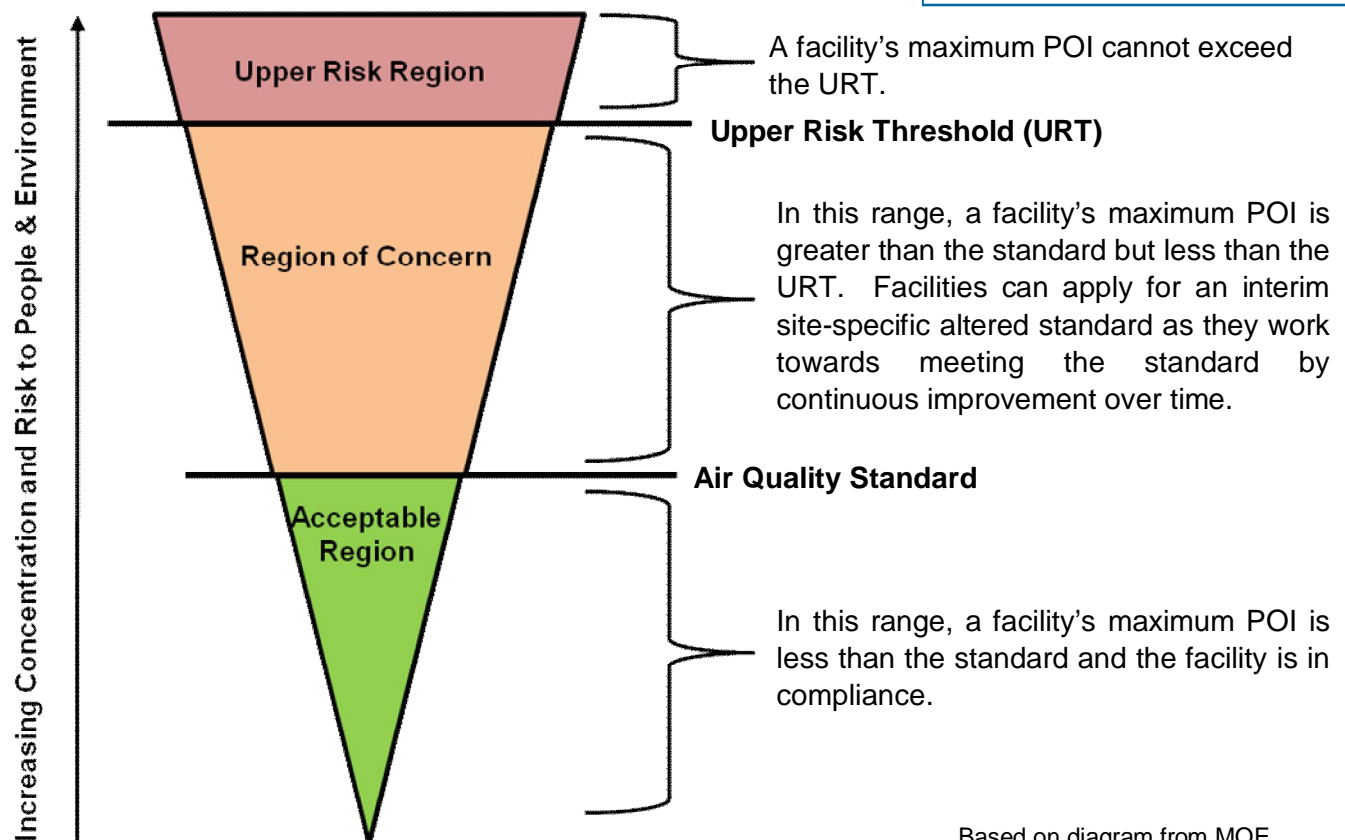
A combination of mathematical models and measured air concentrations are used to determine whether facilities can meet the Air quality standards. The maximum Point of Impingement (POI) must be equal to or lower than the air quality standard for a facility to be in compliance with Ontario Regulation 419/05: Air Pollution—Local Air Quality.

Definitions

Point of Impingement (POI):

Any location beyond the facility's property line where an air pollutant emitted from a facility will contact the ground or a receptor (building, property)

Maximum POI: The location beyond the facility's property line where the highest concentration of a pollutant is predicted to contact the ground or a receptor under any plausible meteorological condition (worst case scenario).



What is a Site-Specific Altered Standard?

A site-specific altered standard is an interim standard applicable to a specific facility or site for a specific duration of time, typically five years. Facilities can apply to the MOE for a site-specific altered standard for an interim period as they work towards meeting the air quality standard by continuous improvement over time. The application involves submission of the following:

- An emission summary and dispersion modeling report (shows results of modeling of worst case scenario, including the location, frequency and magnitude of predicted exceedances)
- A technology benchmarking report (a list and ranking of available technology options to reduce emissions)
- An economic feasibility analysis (optional; a cost ranking of available technology options)
- An action plan for achieving specified reductions
- A summary of public consultation

The MOE may approve an altered standard request if:

- Compliance with the standard is not technically feasible or economically feasible (optional)
- Exceedance of the standard would not be frequent
- The altered standard is the minimum alteration necessary
- There is no public interest reason sufficient to deny the request

If the request is approved, the site-specific altered standard applies to the facility for the duration specified. At the end of that time period, the facility must either comply with the air quality standard or reapply for another interim site-specific altered standard.

For more information, visit the MOE website:
<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/air/ministry/index.php>

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Does the public have a role?

Yes. The facility must conduct at least one meeting with the public prior to submission of their application to the MOE and submit a summary of stakeholder consultation with its application. They must notify in writing owners of all properties within 500m of the facility, all properties where the POI may exceed the standard, the Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and the municipality. They must also post a notice for the public meeting in a local newspaper.

Are facilities allowed to emit more?

No. Even if facilities are applying for an altered standard, they must demonstrate that they are reducing their emissions from the current level and that they are striving to get as close to the standard as possible by continuous improvement.