



June 18, 2024

COMPLIANCE ADVISORY PROPER USES OF PORTABLE PERMITS AND/OR REGISTRATIONS AT STATIONARY SOURCES

The purpose of this advisory is to supplement previous advisories¹ issued by the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) regarding the proper uses of portable permits and/or registrations² at stationary sources. This advisory outlines specific requirements for stationary sources to conduct compliant operations using portable permits or registrations issued by SDAPCD.

Determining Proper Uses of Portable Permits or Registrations at a Stationary Source

A stationary source with a facility-wide permit can bring any portable equipment owned by other entities to its facility provided the equipment complies with all applicable requirements and operates under the facility-wide permit.

If a stationary source needs to conduct any operation under portable permits or registrations, it is essential that the operation fully complies with the "Portable Emission Unit" definition under Rule 12.1 (c)(13)³ or Rule 20.1(b)(57)⁴. Key requirements under this definition include: (1) the 12-month residence time limit and (2) the prohibition against replacing portable equipment at a stationary source with another piece of portable equipment that performs the same function as the one being replaced. Furthermore, Rule 12.1(b) *Ineligible Equipment or Invalid Certificates*, specifically states that any engine or equipment unit not meeting the definition of "Portable Emission Unit" is ineligible for registration under the provisions of this rule. Therefore, any equipment that is used as an integral part of the stationary source's operation or supplements or expands its operation must be operated under a stationary permit or registration (when the equipment is eligible for registration).

If the portable equipment fully meets the definition of a "Portable Emission Unit" under Rules 20.1(b)(57) and 12.1(c)(13), it can be operated at the stationary source under a portable permit or registration, provided all applicable requirements are met. For example, an abrasive blasting operation can be conducted under a portable permit or registration at a shipyard stationary source if the operation is for remodeling an office building. However, if the operation is part of the shipyard operation, it must be conducted under a stationary permit to ensure compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements.

¹ [Portable Marine Coating Equipment \(3/24/10\)](#); [Allowable Uses of Portable Internal Combustion Engines at Boatyards and Shipyards \(10/31/17\)](#); [Proper Uses of Portable Equipment \(En Espanol\) \(8/3/20\)](#)

² For the purposes of this advisory, Registrations include the statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program (PERP) and the local registration program (SDAPCD Rule 12.1).

³ [Rule 12.1 - Portable Equipment Registration \(10/30/2019\) \(sdapcd.org\)](#)

⁴ [Rule 20.1 - New Source Review \(NSR\)-General Provisions \(10/14/2021\) \(sdapcd.org\)](#)

Importance of Proper Use of Portable Equipment in Relation to Air Quality

Portable permits or registrations can be subject to less stringent requirements compared to stationary source permits because they are intended for temporary use. Improper use of portable equipment can result in the circumvention of New Source Review (NSR) and Toxics New Source Review (TNSR) requirements and increased emissions since the SDAPCD would evaluate each operation under portable permit/registration individually. If a stationary source uses portable equipment regularly as part of its ongoing processes, it could lead to piecemealing operations. Specifically, under NSR rules, each operation can emit up to 10 pounds per day without requiring Best Available Control Technology (BACT), but BACT could apply if the operation's aggregate emissions were evaluated. The same issue arises when implementing requirements under Rule 1200, where individually permitted operations might have acceptable health risks, but the aggregate risk could be elevated.

Additionally, a typical stationary source permit includes specific requirements such as limits on throughput, size, and emissions, which establish the potential emissions for a stationary source. However, operations conducted under portable authorizations often lack these restrictions. This absence of clear limits makes it difficult for SDAPCD to determine whether operations are existing (and not subject to NSR or TNSR requirements) or new (and subject to NSR or TNSR requirements). As a result, SDAPCD may face challenges in applying all necessary air quality regulations.

What are the Next Steps?

Any stationary source in San Diego County must submit a permit application to SDAPCD by December 1, 2024, to properly permit their operations if both of the following statements apply:

1. Operations are conducted at a stationary source under portable registrations or permits, **and**;
2. Those operations are an integral part of the stationary source's operation or supplement or expand the operation.

Additionally, all permit applications pursuant to SDAPCD Rule 10⁵ are subject to all the requirements discussed in this advisory. These requirements must be complied with upon the issuance of the authorization by SDAPCD.

If you are the owner or operator of any portable registered equipment (such as abrasive blast pot/machine), your registration continues to be valid as long as the registered equipment is used as discussed in this advisory (i.e. the registered equipment shall not be used as part of the stationary source's operation).

For questions regarding permit applications, please contact APCDEngineering@sdapcd.org.
For compliance questions, please contact apcdcomp@sdapcd.org.

⁵ [Rule 10 - Permits Required \(05/15/1996\) \(sdapcd.org\)](#)