



Breathe Providence Odor Reporting Project

The City of Providence's Department of Sustainability is partnering with Breathe Providence to collect and compile information about odors in the city. Breathe Providence is a research team aiming to understand Providence's air quality on a hyperlocal level. The Department of Sustainability is supporting them in their effort to document odors in Providence through an Odor Reporting Form, which asks for the location, type, time and severity of the odor. The purpose of the project is to better understand where, what kind and how frequently odors are smelled as well as the physical symptoms that residents experience as a result.

Want to learn more about Breathe Providence and their work to meet community demands for more comprehensive environmental monitoring, especially in places where frontline communities, children and people with respiratory disease are living, working and playing? Check out their website!

Department of Sustainability:

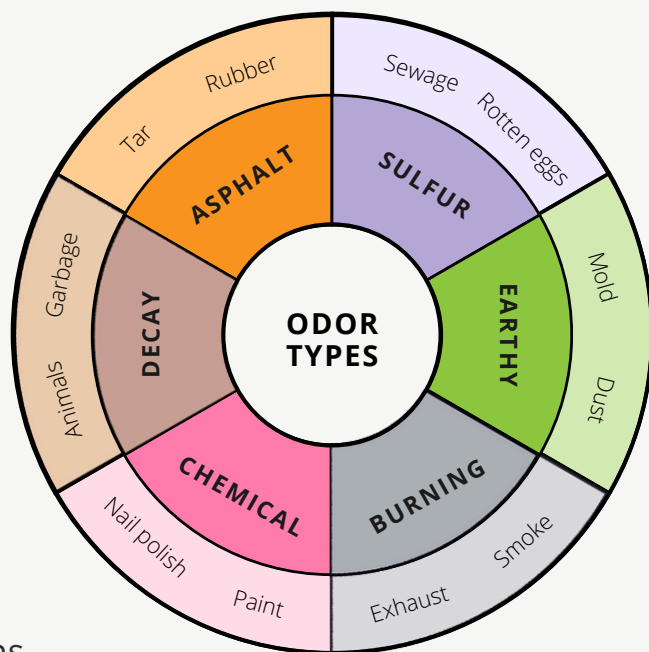
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Odors in Providence and How to Protect Yourself

What causes environmental odors?

Odors can be caused by a variety of sources such as industrial activity, vehicles, and wastewater treatment. The odor wheel on the right shows common odor types found in Providence and specific examples.

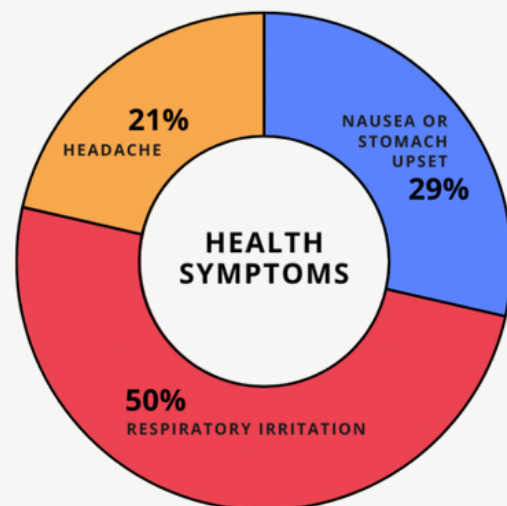


How can odors effect my health?

Everyone reacts to odors differently, but many people will experience health symptoms. People who are more sensitive to an odor may have symptoms even when odors are faint. In general, as odor intensity and duration increases, people's health will be more greatly affected. Symptoms may sometimes continue after you are no longer smelling the odor.

In Providence, the most commonly reported symptoms caused by odors are:

- Nausea
- Headache
- Respiratory irritation including:
 - Eye, nose, throat irritation
 - Coughing
 - Discomfort breathing



Who is most at risk for these symptoms?

Young children, the elderly, pregnant people, and people with lung or heart conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or heart disease.

The best way to prevent these symptoms is to minimize your exposure to odors. Tips for how to do so are on the next page.



How do I prevent exposure to odors if I'm outside?



- Wear a mask. Masks with an N95, KN95, or FFP3 rating are recommended. [Read here](#) about how to ensure your mask is effective and well-fitting.



- Commute to work/school earlier to avoid rush hour so you aren't exposed to as much pollution.



- If you're in the car, press the recirculate button (a car symbol with a sideways U-shaped arrow inside) so you don't pull in polluted air.

How do I prevent exposure to odors if I'm indoors?



- Close windows and doors if you can smell odors. Use duct tape or towels to prevent air from getting inside. Seal window air conditioners, exhaust fans, and vents.



- Use an indoor air filter. [Here are instructions on how to build one yourself](#), or attend a Breathe Providence event to learn how.



- Set your heating, air conditioning, or ventilation system so that it recirculates the indoor air and does not draw in outdoor air.



- Avoid using candles, air sprays, or other scented air fresheners, which can worsen symptoms such as headaches. Instead, try dabbing essential oil under your nose or using strong-scented chapstick.

What additional steps can I take to protect myself from odors if I have asthma?

- Keep your quick-relief medicine on hand when you're outdoors for long periods or doing physical activity.
- Talk to your doctor about increasing medicine dosage when air pollution is high.
- Asthma symptoms may begin up to a day after you have been exposed to odors. Odors can make you more sensitive to indoor asthma triggers, like dust mites.

Where can I report an odor? What will be done to address it?

You can report the odor to PVD 311 online or using the app. Reports can be filed anonymously or using your name, and 311 will open a case to follow up with you about their response to the report.

Additional resources:

- Learn more about lung health, air pollution, and odors [here](#)
- Learn more about asthma and RI's Asthma Control Program [here](#)
- Learn about the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee (REJC) and how to get involved with advocacy [here](#)

