



HB21-1189 Community Monitoring: Quarter 1 2026

Scope and Applicability

To fulfill the community monitoring requirements outlined in The Regulate Air Toxics Act (HB21-1189), the Air Pollution Control Division (APCD) Air Toxics and Ozone Precursors Program (ATOPs) utilized the Community Air Toxics (CAT) mobile laboratory in accordance with the state of Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) mission. The CAT was designed and developed by TofWerk and includes three instruments incorporated into a Mercedes Sprinter van for “real-time” measurement of ambient air while driving in communities. A duplicate of the CAT mobile lab, called the Emissions Monitoring Utility (EMU), was put into service on December 8, 2023.

The Colorado Regulate Air Toxics Act specifies monitoring of three toxic trace gases (benzene, hydrogen cyanide, and hydrogen sulfide) in the communities surrounding four covered facilities to better understand how people in those communities are impacted by air quality. These air toxics are pollutants that are known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects, such as reproductive effects or birth defects, or adverse environmental effects. HB21-1189 also directs Colorado’s Air Quality Control Commission to identify additional covered air toxics over time. This mobile monitoring platform allows for measurement of hydrogen cyanide, hydrogen sulfide, benzene, and several “non-covered” volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Method Overview

The CAT and EMU mobile laboratories both consist of two mass spectrometers and one optical spectrometer. Ambient air is introduced to the instruments through tubing on the roof of the van. In addition, a MaxiMet weather station collects location, and meteorological data (temperature, relative humidity, barometric pressure, wind speed and wind direction).

The Vocus Eiger Proton-Transfer Reaction Time-of-Flight Mass Spectrometer (PTR-ToF-MS) instrument operates using proton-transfer reaction mass spectrometry. This process uses hydronium ions (H_3O^+) to measure volatile organic compounds (VOCs). In the first step, the primary (or “reagent”) ions react with trace gases in air, ionizing them. The resulting analyte ions are separated and quantified with a time-of-flight mass spectrometer.

The Vocus Aim Chemical Ionization Time-of-Flight Mass Spectrometer (CI-ToF-MS) instrument operates using chemical ionization mass spectrometry. This is a two-step ionization technique. In the first step, the primary (or “reagent”) ions are made by illuminating a reagent gas stream with a vacuum ultraviolet (VUV) lamp. The resulting ions are mixed with ambient air in a reaction cell. There, the reagent ions interact with trace gases in air, ionizing them. The resulting analyte ions are separated and quantified with a time-of-flight mass spectrometer.

The Picarro Cavity Ring-Down Spectrometer (CRDS) analyzer uses light from a single-frequency laser that enters a cavity where three mirrors reflect the laser light. When the laser is on, the cavity quickly fills with laser light. A small amount of the laser light is transmitted through the mirror closest to the photodetector, which turns the incident light into a

signal that is directly proportional to the light intensity in the cavity. As the light circulates in a cavity with a gas sample, the molecular absorption by the gas results in a decrease of the light intensity. Plotting the absorbance at each measured wavelength generates an optical spectrum. This spectrum contains absorbance peaks that are unique to each molecule in the sample. The height of a particular absorption peak is proportional to the concentration of a molecule that generated the signal.

Table 1. Instruments in CAT and EMU mobile monitoring laboratories with the respective compounds that each instrument reports.

CAT/ EMU Instruments	Compounds reported
Vocus Eiger PTR-TOF-MS	Benzene, Toluene, Xylenes, Trimethylbenzene
Vocus Aim CI-TOF-MS	Hydrogen Cyanide (HCN)
Picarro CRDS	Hydrogen Sulfide (H ₂ S), Methane (CH ₄)

Quarterly Data Summary Notes for Q1 2026

Relevant links:

- [Community Air Toxics Mobile Lab \(CAT\) Flyer – ENG](#)
- [Community Air Toxics Mobile Lab \(CAT\) Flyer – ESP](#)
- [Emissions Monitoring Utility \(EMU\) Flyer – ENG](#)
- [CDPHE- Regulate Air Toxics Act](#)
- Stationary Wind data resources:
 - [CDPHE Air Quality Dashboard](#)
 - [CDPHE Meteorology Data Selector Map](#)

I. Method Detection Limit

The reported Method Detection Limits (MDLs) were determined during the instrument audits following a procedure defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as the “minimum measured concentration of a substance that can be reported with 99% confidence that the measured concentration is distinguishable from method blank results”. The table of MDLs for each compound and asset are reported on the Quarterly Summary tab of the Data Summary. The “MD” flag was used to flag data that is less than the MDL.

II. Hydrogen Cyanide and Benzene Concentration Analyses

Hydrogen cyanide and benzene measurements were analyzed using Tofware high resolution analysis software. This software uses high resolution peak fitting to better isolate benzene ($C_6H_6^+$) and hydrogen cyanide (HCN^+) signals from interfering species.

III. Computing Statistics

Data with the flag “BR” (indicating negative values less than $-MDL$) are replaced with zeros for computing statistics and data within $\pm$ the value of the MDL are flagged “MD” and replaced with $0.5*MDL$ for statistics.

The quarterly pollutants stats table was computed at the end of the quarter for the specific region.

IV. Instrument Time Delay

There are sampling time delays between the different instruments due to differences in sample line tubing length and sampling flow rates. Currently, the time delay due to sample residence

time is not corrected for in the quarterly data packets. These sampling residence times were calculated from the flow rates measured during the quarterly audits.

Table 2. Mobile monitoring van instrumentation with the sampling residence times for each CAT & EMU mobile monitoring laboratories.

Instruments	Compounds reported	Sample Residence Time (CAT)	Sample Residence Time (EMU)
Vocus Eiger PTR-ToF-MS	Benzene, toluene, xylenes, trimethylbenzene	<2 seconds	<2 seconds
Vocus AIM CI-ToF-MS	Hydrogen cyanide (HCN)	4 seconds	<2 seconds
Picarro CRDS	Hydrogen sulfide (H ₂ S), Methane (CH ₄)	12 seconds	12 seconds

V. Meteorological Data

A large amount of MetData has the flag “QW”, indicating questionable wind data.

When the vehicle is moving quickly and wind speeds are low, it can be challenging to accurately measure true wind.

Wind data are flagged if:

1. True wind cannot be distinguished from the wind generated by the vehicle’s motion while driving.
2. The difference between the wind speed (direction) and the vehicle’s speed (direction) is less than the error of the MaxiMet.

If the MetData are flagged “QW”, we encourage the user to use external sources to verify wind speed and direction:

[CDPHE Air Quality Dashboard](#)

[CDPHE Meteorology Data Selector Map](#)

VI. GPS Data

GPS measurements are collected using a VectorNav GNSS-Aided Inertial Navigation System (GNSS/INS) and supplemented by a MaxiMet meteorological station. Beginning in Q3 of 2024, new procedures were implemented for quality-correcting and post-correcting GPS data. When needed and if possible, incorrect GPS points were post-corrected by snapping their drifted

location back to the deployment route and are flagged ‘CG’. Data points that are flagged only as ‘QG’ indicate that the point strayed from the deployment route, making the data point questionable. Data points that are flagged ‘QG’ and ‘AQ’ were nulled because the GPS location was too far from the standard route to confidently be post-corrected.

Beginning in Q1 of 2026, GPS measurements collected within approximately 250 m of ATOPs headquarters are flagged ‘SX’ to indicate non-ambient measurements. Data reported within this region are likely not representative of ambient conditions as they include measurements collected from the interior of the ATOPs headquarters garage at the start and end of a deployment.

VII. Quarter Specific notes

A. EMU Vocus “B” AIM CI-ToF-MS Hydrogen Cyanide Overestimation

During audits performed on December 16, 2025 and January 6, 2026, the Vocus “B” AIM CI-ToF-MS installed in the EMU mobile monitoring lab measured hydrogen cyanide with 124–144% recoveries. Thus, hydrogen cyanide measurements collected by the EMU mobile lab within this quarter likely overestimate the ambient concentrations of hydrogen cyanide by 24–44%.