

CASTNET Ozone Monitoring Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will EPA use CASTNET ozone data for NAAQS attainment purposes?

Yes. 40 CFR Part 58 App D Ch 1.1 states that all FRM, FEM or ARM monitors for NAAQS pollutants will be used for comparing an area's air pollution levels against the NAAQS. CASTNET uses the reference method approved by EPA and listed here: <http://epa.gov/ttn/amtic/files/ambient/criteria/reference-equivalent-methods-list.pdf>.

2. Why did EPA change CASTNET's ozone monitoring procedures?

CASTNET was not originally designed to operate as an ozone regulatory monitoring network; however, many stakeholders, including CASAC and NACAA, requested that ozone data measured by CASTNET be of comparable data quality as that collected by SLAMS. In 2010, the Clean Air Markets Division began upgrading the QA/QC protocols, evaluation criteria, audit schedules and equipment to ensure EPA-sponsored CASTNET ozone monitors were compliant with the regulatory requirements in 40 CFR Parts 50, 53 and 58. All CASTNET ozone monitors (EPA-, NPS-, and BLM-sponsored) meet the regulatory requirements and will be used for calculating the 2011-2013 3-year ozone design values once the data completeness criteria are met.

3. Can I use a CASTNET site to meet the minimum monitoring requirements for my area (Table D-2 of Appendix D to Part 58)?

Yes, because CASTNET sites meet the regulatory requirements they may be used in place of a SLAMS monitor. CAMD, NPS and/or BLM will coordinate with any monitoring agency using a CASTNET site to meet their monitoring requirements and provide the agency with a notice of any proposed changes to the CASTNET site one year in advance. Proposed changes to any CASTNET ozone monitoring site are included in the annual network plan that is posted on the [CASTNET website](#).

4. Where can I access the CASTNET ozone data?

Final hourly ozone data may be accessed through AQS, the CASTNET data download page, or the CASTNET ftp site. Final data will have a QA code of 3. QA codes are defined in the CASTNET QAPP posted under [Reports and Documentation](#) on the CASTNET website.

Near-real time ozone data may be accessed through EPA's AirNow tech page using 'OAP', 'NPS' or 'BLW' as the agency ID for EPA, NPS and BLM sites, respectively. "Level 1" data are posted to the CASTNET Data Download page and the ftp site approximately 24 hours after collection. Level 1 data are preliminary and are subject to change after data review.

CASTNET webpage: <http://epa.gov/castnet>

CASTNET FTP: <ftp://ftp.epa.gov/castnet/data/>

AirNow Tech: <http://www.airnowtech.org/>

5. When are zero, span and precision (z/s/p) checks performed?

Automated z/s/p checks are performed nightly at 0, 400, and 90 ppb, respectively. A weekly multi-point precision check is performed on Sunday at 0, 60, 90, 200, 300, and 400 ppb.

6. Where can I find results from the QC checks?

Daily z/s/p checks, as well as weekly multi-point calibration results may be accessed through the Data Download page under Measurement (Raw Data) or the ftp site.

7. How do I know if a site in my area passed the annual Performance Evaluation (PE)?

The results of the PEs are posted in the quarterly audit reports (<http://epa.gov/castnet/javaweb/ozone.html>) and loaded into AQS by the independent contractor that performed the PE.

8. How will I know when a CASTNET monitor exceeds the standard?

You may choose to sign up to receive an automatic email when a site measures an 8-hour avg over the current ozone standard. Activating and deactivating auto email communications is easy. Please send an email with the sites you wish to receive updates for to Timothy Sharac (sharac.timothy@epa.gov)

9. Where can I view QA documentation?

The network QAPP, including the SOPs, can be found under “Documents and Reports” on the CASTNET website. The quarterly QA and quarterly independent audit reports can also be accessed here. (<http://epa.gov/castnet/documents.do>)

10. When are site audits performed?

Each CASTNET ozone monitor is audited, and calibrated if necessary, every 6-months by the contractor. During the 6-month audit, the site analyzer is challenged with a Level II transfer standard.

Annually, a performance evaluation (PE) through-the-probe audit is performed by an independent contractor. The contractor follows the guidance in the technical memo dated Feb. 2011 (<http://www.epa.gov/ttnamti1/files/ambient/pm25/datamang/20110217lowlevelstatmemo.pdf>)

Technical Systems Audits (TSA) are performed at 50% of the network sites annually by an independent auditor. Results from the TSA are documented in quarterly reports posted to the CASTNET ozone website.

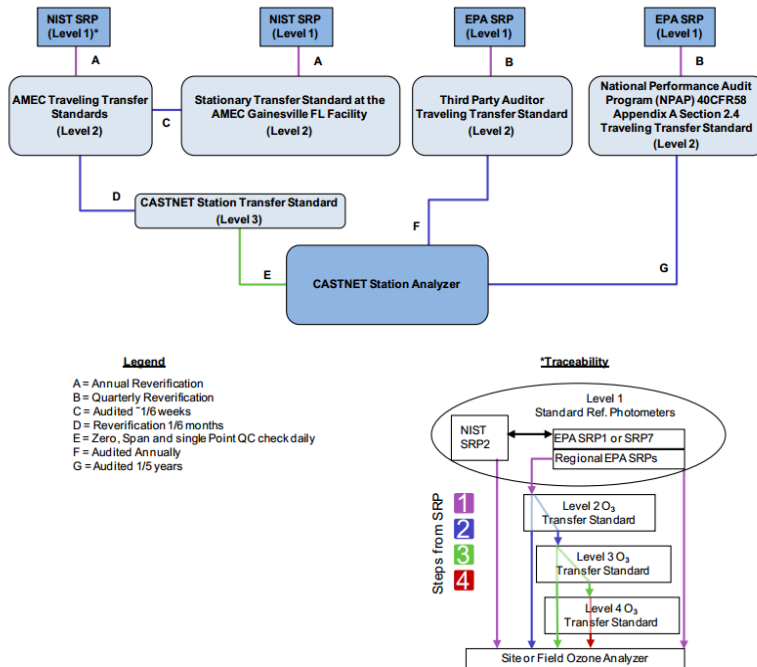
Twenty percent of the CASTNET sites participate in the National Performance Audit Program (NPAP) annually. CAMD coordinates with OAQPS and EPA Regional offices to select which sites will be included each year.

11. Where can I find a flow chart of the ozone analyzer and site transfer certification process?

Please see the ozone certification figure from the CASTNET Field QAPP:

8.0 TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1. Ozone Certification



http://epa.gov/castnet/javaweb/docs/qapp_v8_App_01_Field_SOP.pdf

12. Can a State, Local agency, or Tribe (S/L/T) perform a PE and/or TSA at a CASTNET site?

You may contact Timothy Sharac to schedule an audit at any of the CASTNET sites within your state/local area/tribal land. Please contact Timothy prior to performing any audit so data may be flagged appropriately and access to the site can be provided.

13. Who operates the CASTNET sites?

Site operators range from independent land owners to university students to environmental professionals and academic faculty. Day-to-day operation of CASTNET sites are managed by a contractor. The contractor reviews the hourly ozone data and QC checks daily. They may troubleshoot problems remotely or contact the site operator to make adjustments if a problem is identified.

14. How should a S/L/T agency handle a possible exceptional event recorded at a CASTNET site?

As stated in 40 CFR 50.14, it is the responsibility of the S/L/T monitoring agency to identify exceptional events. CAMD will rely on the monitoring agencies within the state to identify and report exceptional events. If you wish to denote data as likely being impacted by an exceptional event upon further review, please email Timothy Sharac with the site ID, date range, type of possible exceptional event, and a comment describing the exceptional event. CAMD will then ensure the data are properly flagged in AQS. If a S/L/T agency determines that an exceptional event occurred, they should submit the exceptional event report to the region for concurrence.

15. Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

Please contact Timothy Sharac (sharac.timothy@epa.gov) or Melissa Puchalski (puchalski.melissa@epa.gov)