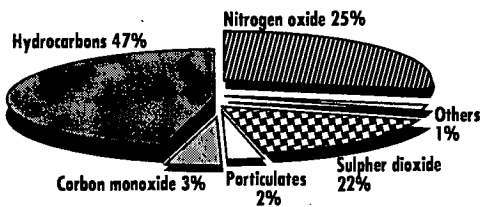


AIR POLLUTION CONTROL

CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIXED-SOURCE AIR POLLUTION IN MEXICO CITY



The use of high-sulphur automotive fuels and heavy crude industrial fuel oil is the biggest single contributor to Mexico's severe air pollution problem. But toxic industrial emissions are a growing problem.

Mexico's large urban centres suffer from very serious air pollution. The most critical problems are in the regions of Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey, which are responsible for 40 percent of all atmospheric emissions. Air pollution is particularly severe in the Valley of Mexico, especially in the Mexico City area. Roughly one-quarter of all Mexican industry is situated in this area, and Mexico City alone has close to four million motor vehicles. The petrochemical producing state of Veracruz has specialized problems, and the rapidly expanding industrial areas in northern Mexico are also considered critical.

Mexico City is widely regarded as the most polluted city in the world. Industrial emissions are almost entirely uncontrolled, but transportation is by far the biggest polluter, accounting for three-quarters of all emissions. Fuel oil and gasoline that is produced by *Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX)*, the national oil company, has a very high sulphur content. Internal combustion engines operate inefficiently at the city's altitude of 2,240 metres. The solutions to these problems lie mainly in the automotive industry, and are not discussed in detail in this profile.

Industrial air pollution is a serious problem because very few plants have emission control systems and because they release a large amount of highly toxic substances. The official standards are not specific enough to effectively regulate these emissions, even if adequate enforcement resources were available. One reason for the lack of enforcement in this area is the perception that it would result in severe economic and political consequences.

The most serious problems are in the pulp and paper, cement, and textile industries: together they account for almost 60 percent of industrial pollution. Part of the industrial air pollution problem results from extensive use of heavy crude oil for fuel. Action on air pollution control is most likely to occur in industries where there is a direct economic benefit, or where air quality is a factor in maintaining product standards.