



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Methane

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Methane (CH₄) is a greenhouse gas that remains in the atmosphere for approximately 9-15 years. Methane is over 20 times more effective in trapping heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide (CO₂) over a 100-year period and is emitted from a variety of natural and human-influenced sources. Human-influenced sources include landfills, natural gas and petroleum systems, agricultural activities, coal mining, stationary and mobile combustion, wastewater treatment, and certain industrial process.



Methane is also a primary constituent of natural gas and an important energy source. As a result, efforts to prevent or utilize methane emissions can provide significant energy, economic and environmental benefits. In the United States, many companies are working with EPA in voluntary efforts to reduce emissions by implementing cost-effective management methods and technologies.

The following links provide more information on methane and EPA's related activities:

- [Science](#): Find out more about methane's role as a greenhouse gas.
- [Sources and Emissions](#): Find out more about the sources of methane and current emission levels.
- [Projections and Mitigation Costs](#): Find projections of future methane emissions and the costs associated with reducing those emissions.
- [Voluntary Programs](#): Learn more about EPA's voluntary programs to reduce methane emissions.
- [Other Non-CO₂ Gases](#): Learn more about the science, emissions, and reduction opportunities for other non-CO₂ greenhouse gases.

[Methane to Markets Partnership](#)

The Partnership will reduce global methane emissions, initially focusing on cost-effective, near-term methane recovery from three major methane sources: landfills, underground coal mines, and natural gas and oil systems. On November 16, 2004, representatives from 13 countries and the U.S. gathered at the first Ministerial Meeting of the Partnership in Washington, D.C.

Methane is one of several non-CO₂ gases that contribute to global climate change. To learn more about these gases and what EPA is doing to reduce their impact, visit our **Non-CO₂ Gases** page.

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This page was generated on Monday, August 14, 2006

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