



# Climate & Smog

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Each person's well-being is a complex response to climate (heat, humidity, etc.), airborne materials (dust, pollens, molds, fumes, odors, etc.) and air pollutants. Sensitive persons, especially those with asthma or lung problems, should evaluate the climate that is most comfortable for them.

High smog levels can make a sensitive person even more uncomfortable. Staying indoors in mid-afternoon on the few days when smog levels are high can significantly reduce exposure and irritation. Peak smog concentrations usually occur in the afternoon from May through October when sunshine is most intense.

Factors such as nearby industry or heavily traveled streets should also be considered by sensitive persons. Undeveloped areas are a source of dust or pollen. Individual reactions can vary so we recommend visiting the area for a period of time and consulting a physician.

San Diego County has five distinct climate zones. Like the mountains, the climatic zones run nearly parallel to the coast and each has its own characteristics:

## **I. Maritime (the coastline inland 3 to 5 miles)**

This climate is dominated by the influence of the Pacific Ocean. The humidity is high and temperatures are mild. Low clouds, fog and dampness are common, and this climate has the highest concentration of mold spores. Maritime communities like Oceanside, Del Mar, and Chula Vista have warm winter days to 65°F and summer afternoons in the mid-70s.

## **II. Coastal (about 5 to 15 miles inland)**

Afternoons are a bit warmer and nights a little cooler. The ocean's influence is diminished but is still significant. As you move 10 miles inland, the prevailing climate is semi-arid to arid. This reduces the number of mold spores but increases the amount of dust and particulate matter in the air. The communities in this region including much of San Diego experience frequent summer morning fog and clouds and moderate humidity.

## **III. Transitional (about 20 to 25 miles inland)**

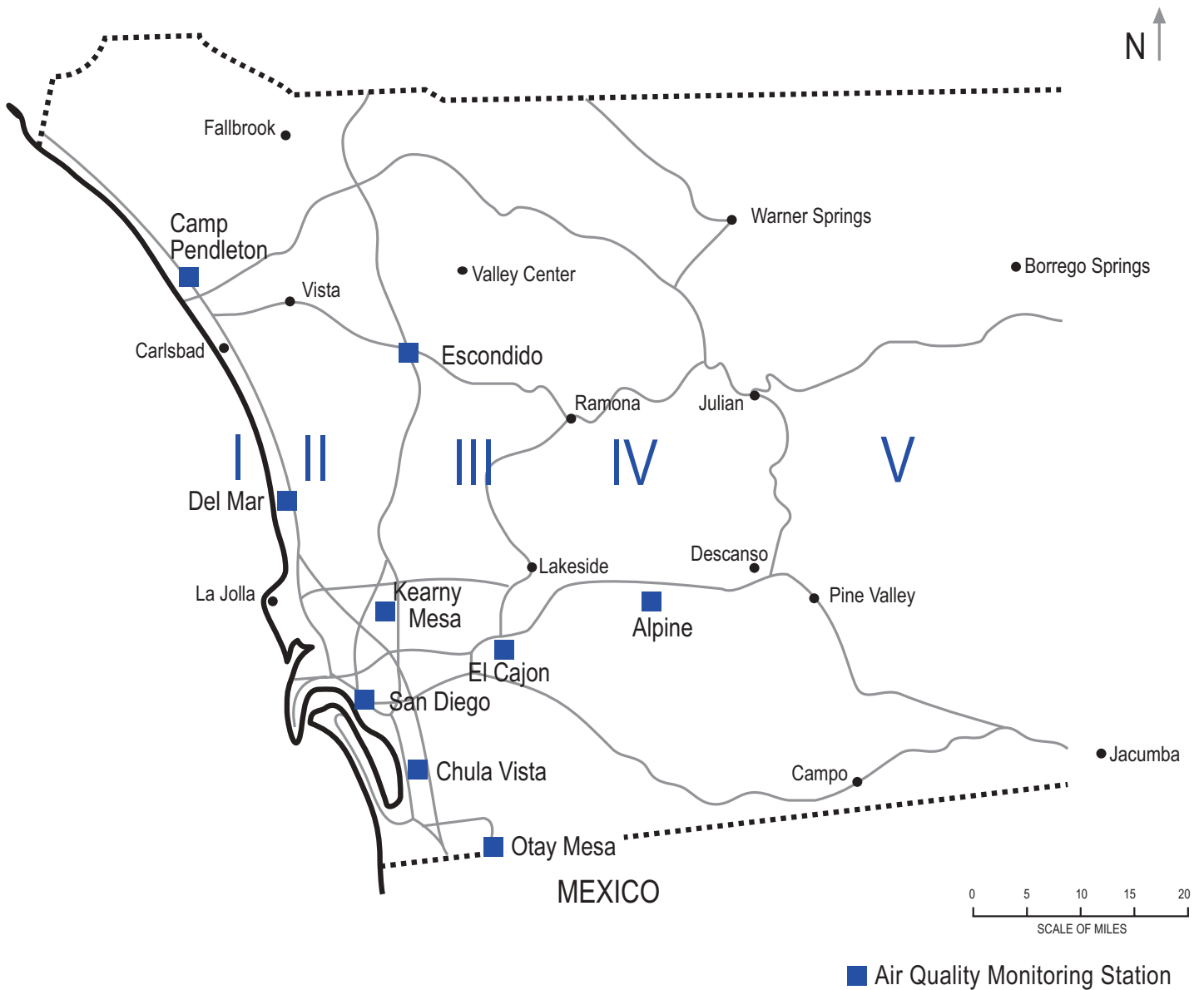
Communities in this zone may experience coastal climate conditions for brief periods but normally have warm, dry climate. Daytime humidity is low. Summer temperatures may reach 100°F. Winter days are milder around 70°F with frosty morning readings. Escondido and El Cajon are transitional communities.

## **IV. Interior (about 25 to 60 miles inland)**

The terrain, rising from 2,000 to 6,500 feet, produces dramatic contrasts in climate. It can be in the 70's in Cuyamaca with moderate humidity and a dry 90°F day at Campo. The western slope communities such as Ramona (1600 elevation), Alpine (2000 elevation) and Descanso (2500 feet) are more at the mercy of the inversion layer which traps pollutants. High mountain communities such as Pine Valley and Julian, located further inland above 4,000 feet and the inversion layer, are relatively free of San Diego's smog. The western facing slopes receive the greatest amount of rain and also create the "rain shadow" that is responsible for the desert conditions in the eastern part of the county.

## **V. Desert (about 60 miles inland to the eastern border)**

San Diego's smog problem has little or no impact on the desert. Temperatures in the desert can reach 120°F in the summer and a much milder 80°F in the winter.



## Area Climates

- I **Maritime** (the coastline inland 3 to 5 miles)
- II **Coastal** (from about 5 to 15 miles inland)
- III **Transitional** (20-25 miles)
- IV **Interior** (25 to 60 miles inland)
- V **Desert** (60 miles to the eastern border)