



Support Center for Regulatory Atmospheric Modeling (SCRAM) Receptor Modeling

Receptor models are mathematical or statistical procedures for identifying and quantifying the sources of air pollutants at a receptor location. Unlike photochemical and dispersion air quality models, receptor models do not use pollutant emissions, meteorological data and chemical transformation mechanisms to estimate the contribution of sources to receptor concentrations. Instead, receptor models use the chemical and physical characteristics of gases and particles measured at source and receptor to both identify the presence of and to quantify source contributions to receptor concentrations. These models are therefore a natural complement to other air quality models and are used as part of State Implementation Plans (SIPs) for identifying sources contributing to air quality problems. The EPA has developed the Chemical Mass Balance (CMB) and UNMIX models as well as the Positive Matrix Factorization (PMF) method for use in air quality management. CMB fully apportions receptor concentrations to chemically distinct source-types depending upon the source profile database, while UNMIX and PMF internally generate source profiles from the ambient data.

Chemical Mass Balance (CMB) - The EPA-CMB Version 8.2 uses source profiles and speciated ambient data to quantify source contributions. Contributions are quantified from chemically distinct source-types rather than from individual emitters. Sources with similar chemical and physical properties cannot be distinguished from each other by CMB.

UNMIX - The EPA UNMIX model "unmixes" the concentrations of chemical species measured in the ambient air to identify the contributing sources. Chemical profiles of the sources are not required, but instead are generated internally from the ambient data by UNMIX, using a mathematical formulation based on a form of factor analysis. For a given selection of species, UNMIX estimates the number of sources, the source compositions, and source contributions to each sample.

Positive Matrix Factorization (PMF) - The PMF technique is a form of factor analysis where the underlying co-variability of many variables (e.g., sample to sample variation in PM species) is described by a smaller set of factors (e.g., PM sources) to which the original variables are related. The structure of PMF permits maximum use of available data and better treatment of missing and below-detection-limit values. Also available is a document which discusses the PMF methodology: "[A Guide to Positive Matrix Factorization](#)" (PDF, 16 pp., 215 KB).

Additional Information about air quality models can be found at [Related Links](#).

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