Sulfur Dioxide Encyclopedia Article

Sulfur Dioxide

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Sulfur Dioxide

Along with sulfur trioxide, one of the two common oxides of sulfur existing in the **atmosphere**. Sulfur dioxide is produced naturally in the atmosphere by the oxidation of **hydrogen** sulfide, a gas released from volcanoes and hot springs. About 22 million tons (20 million metric tons) of sulfur dioxide is released annually into the atmosphere by human activities, primarily during the **combustion** of **fossil fuels**. The amount of **anthropogenic** sulfur dioxide is roughly equal to that formed naturally from hydrogen sulfide. Sulfur dioxide reacts with water in clouds to form **acid rain**, causes damage in plants, and is responsible for a variety of respiratory problems in humans.