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Atmos. Chem. Phys., 8, 3761-3768, 2008

www.atmos-chem-phys.net/8/3761/2008/

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On the volatility and production mechanisms of newly formed nitrate and water soluble organic aerosol in Mexico City

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Abstract. Measurements of atmospheric gases and fine particle chemistry were made in the Mexico City Metropolitan Area (MCMA) at a site ~30 km down wind of the city center. Ammonium nitrate (NH₄NO₃) dominated the inorganic aerosol fraction and showed a distinct diurnal signature characterized by rapid morning production and a rapid mid-day concentration decrease. Between the hours of 08:00–12:45, particulate water-soluble organic carbon (WSOC) concentrations increased and decreased in a manner consistent with that of NO₃⁻, and the two were highly correlated ($R^2=0.88$) during this time. A box model was used to analyze these behaviors and showed that, for both NO₃⁻ and WSOC, the concentration increase was caused primarily (~75–85%) by secondary formation, with a smaller contribution (~15–25%) from the entrainment of air from the free troposphere. For NO₃⁻, a majority (~60%) of the midday concentration decrease was caused by dilution from boundary layer expansion, though a significant fraction (~40%) of the NO₃⁻ loss was due to particle evaporation. The WSOC concentration decrease was due largely to dilution (~75%), but volatilization did have a meaningful impact (~25%) on the decrease, as well. The results provide an estimate of ambient SOA evaporation losses and suggest that a significant fraction (~35%) of the fresh MCMA secondary organic aerosol (SOA) measured at the surface volatilized.

[Final Revised Paper](#) (PDF, 361 KB) [Discussion Paper](#) (ACPD)

Citation: Hennigan, C. J., Sullivan, A. P., Fountoukis, C. I., Nenes, A., Hecobian, A., Vargas, O., Peltier, R. E., Case Hanks, A. T., Huey, L. G., Lefer, B. L., Russell, A. G., and Weber, R. J.: On the volatility and production mechanisms of newly formed nitrate and water soluble organic aerosol in Mexico City, Atmos. Chem. Phys., 8, 3761-3768, 2008. [Bibtex](#) [EndNote](#) [Reference Manager](#)

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