



CITY HIGHLIGHTER



Ozone Season: April 1st — October 31st Be Air Aware

1. Is there an outdoor air quality concern for the Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area (Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey, Sumner counties)?

In August, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will lower the health standard for ozone. While the Wichita MSA has met the standards for more than two decades, the tougher standard could put this area out of compliance. It is not yet known to what level EPA will lower the standard. However, the four-county area is already close to exceeding the most recent standard of 0.075 parts per million (ppm).

2. What happens if the area goes out of compliance?

First, health can be affected. Ozone can harm people's lungs. Those with respiratory illnesses and children are most at risk. Individuals with asthma or other lung diseases, as well as those who spend a lot of time outside, such as children, may be particularly vulnerable.

Second, according to a study of other areas out of attainment, residents, local businesses and local governments could be forced to pay for costly air-quality improvement programs. The costs could total more than \$10 million dollars a year for 10 years to get back into compliance. Some costs could come from new requirements. Those might include annual mandatory vehicle emissions testing and car-pooling. Industrial employers may have to spend money to upgrade air-quality equipment. Such requirements could discourage businesses from expanding or relocating in the community. State and local governments may also face additional expenses to prove road projects don't contribute to additional air pollution.

3. What causes ozone, a pollutant known as smog?

Ozone is caused by the reaction of sunlight, heat and chemical emissions. Ozone levels are dependent on many factors

including weather and routine activities such as driving a vehicle, construction or other activities that use a fuel or emit organic pollution. Emissions from industrial facilities, electric utilities, motor vehicle exhaust, gasoline vapors, and chemical solvents are the major man-made sources of these ozone precursors.

4. What can residents do to help?

To help reduce ozone pollution, residents are encouraged to turn off their vehicle when stopped for more than one minute, keep vehicles tuned up and tires properly inflated. Please see the tip sheet for more suggestions.

5. How does the EPA determine compliance?

The EPA monitors locations around the country for air pollution. There are three air monitors – near Peck, Wichita and Park City - that are used to determine compliance with the federal ozone standard. The monitors run continuously every day, all year long. However, the EPA only considers the days that fall within ozone season – April 1-Oct. 31 - for purposes of compliance. Visit wichita.gov for more details.

6. When will the EPA determine if this area is in compliance?

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) will look at the ozone monitoring results of 2008, 2009 and 2010 at the end of October (ozone season). The EPA is expected to make a determination after the first of the year.

7. What is the City of Wichita and its partners doing to remain in compliance?

More than 10 years ago, the City of Wichita formed the Air Quality Improvement Task Force. This group, comprised of businesses, industries, government agencies and organizations, meets monthly during the ozone season to implement voluntary ways to reduce ozone. The recommendations will be provided to City management for consideration.



*For more information call the
City of Wichita Public Informa-
tion Office at 268-4351.
www.wichita.gov*