

The Ozone Standard

The Clean Air Act gives the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to establish national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). In the Tulsa area, the only pollutant we especially have a continuing problem with is ozone. As of now, the Tulsa area and the state of Oklahoma remain in attainment (not on the EPA's 'Dirty Air List') of the ozone standard—but just barely.

To determine whether or not we meet the standard, we average three years of ozone monitor data, also called an ozone "design value." The standard is currently set at a design value of .075 parts per million (ppm) or less. Tulsa's design value IS currently .075 ppm. Because of the serious health and environmental problems ground-level ozone can create, EPA finds it necessary to periodically strengthen or tighten the ozone standard. They are presently considering making the standard much stricter.

What is the difference between "exceeding" and "violating" the ozone standard?

The EPA's national ozone standard is considered to be "exceeded" when any one monitor records an 8-hour ozone average greater than .075 ppm. This corresponds to an Air Quality Index (AQI) of higher than 100, which means unhealthy air. Exceedances may occur throughout the ozone season, however an area is not considered to have "violated" the ozone standard unless/until the 3-year average of ozone (specifically of the 4th highest readings) is greater than .075 ppm. A great way to keep track throughout the summer is the Season ScoreCard at the OzoneAlert.Com website.

OzoneAlert.Com

Sign up for Ozone Alert! Notices

You can keep track of the area's real-time ozone levels throughout the season by logging onto www.OzoneAlert.com. This site is dedicated solely to the Tulsa area. On the site, you can also sign up to receive Ozone Alerts by email. Or on your phone, simply text the word 'ozone' to #95920.



Tulsa's Ozone Monitors

The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) maintains five ozone monitoring stations in the Tulsa Metro area (as seen in the map below). This is considered the "Tulsa AirShed". Because ozone takes time to 'cook', no matter where you live in the airshed, you are affected by the pollution at ground-level and are benefitted by the voluntary efforts of the Ozone Alert! Program.



OzoneAlert.Com

Tulsa Area Ozone Alert! Program



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What is the Ozone Alert! Program?



The voluntary, proactive Ozone Alert! Program

was created to maintain Tulsa's clean air status. The award-winning program has been widely replicated throughout the country. Cities such as Dallas/Ft. Worth, San Francisco, Cincinnati, and many others, large and small, have adopted the voluntary Ozone Alert! concept. And it works!

The Ozone Alert! Program predicts days when atmospheric conditions may cause unhealthy levels of ozone in Tulsa. This advance prediction allows the community to take **voluntary** measures to reduce ozone formation.

Ozone in the upper atmosphere is a beneficial and protective layer around the earth, but ground-level ozone is harmful air pollution that threatens our health, quality of life, and the Tulsa area's economic prosperity.

Ground-level ozone is created when sunlight reacts with volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx). Reducing these emissions is necessary to reduce ground-level ozone formation.

No matter where you live in the Tulsa area, you probably affect and are affected by our air quality.



Why should I care about the Ozone problem in the Tulsa Area?

Exposure to ground level ozone is a threat to our health. Five groups of people are especially vulnerable to the effects of breathing ozone: children, senior citizens, people who work or exercise outdoors, people with preexisting respiratory disease (e.g., asthma or COPD) and "responders" who are otherwise healthy but have an enhanced reaction to ozone.

Ozone's effect on an individual's health can depend on many factors, including whether they are part of a susceptible population group, how much ozone is in the air, how rapidly they breathe, and how long they are exposed to the ozone.

No matter where you live in the Tulsa area, you probably affect and are affected by our air quality.

Take Action on Ozone Alert! Days

- **Leave your car at home.** Walk, bike, carpool, ride the bus or telecommute.
- **Avoid idling.** On Alert! Days walk-in rather than drive-thru.
- **Bring your lunch to work.** "Brown bag it" or walk to lunch.
- **Postpone refueling.** Wait until evening or not at all on Alert! Days.
- **Postpone mowing and using other gasoline-powered lawn equipment.** Wait until evening or not at all on Alert! Days
- **Postpone errands on an Ozone Alert! Day.**

