



Ozone Season

The ozone season runs from April 1—October 31 each year—with ozone levels reported from May 1—September 30.

Most of the Centralina Council of Governments region was included in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designation of non-attainment for 8-hour ozone levels in April, 2004. As a result of this designation we need to be more aware of the actions taken by local government, business and industry and as individuals during this season.

Centralina COG staff is available to assist you with developing a plan for your office or business.


We can make a difference in the air quality of our region—are you willing to be a part of the solution?

What can we do as individuals and businesses to lessen the impact during Ozone Season?

- Drive less
- Take your lunch to work
- Telecommute
- Walk or ride your bicycle to work
- Use transit, carpool or vanpool
- Combine errands into one trip
- Avoid the drive thru
- Limit vehicle idling – institute a company policy – it will save money and be better for the air
- Conserve electricity—set A/C to your highest comfort level and use compact fluorescent light bulbs
- Gas your vehicle after 6 p.m.
- Purchase hybrid vehicles
- Consider flexible work schedules – work 9 hour days and one day off during a two-week pay period

The daily Air Quality Index is available each day on most of your local TV and radio stations, local newspapers or at <http://airquality.charmeck.org>.

Ozone action days are those on which the air quality is at a Code Orange or above.



Sustainable Environment for Quality of Life (SEQL)
Centralina Council of Governments
1300 Baxter St., Suite 450
P. O. Box 35008
Charlotte, NC 28235
Phone (704) 348-2730
Fax (704) 347-4710
Email: clewis@centralina.org



Ozone Season



web site:
www.seql.org



Ozone season— what you need to know

Q: What exactly is ozone?

A: Ozone is a highly reactive gas that forms in the atmosphere when atoms of oxygen are combined through a chemical reaction. Ozone is not emitted directly into the air but, at ground level, is created by a chemical reaction between oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of sunlight and heat.

Q: Isn't ozone just an urban area problem?

A: Ozone levels generally are higher in urban areas, which contain more vehicles, industry and other emissions sources. However, winds can carry the threat of ground-level ozone from cities to surrounding rural areas and even to other states.

Q: Why do we need to do something about ozone?

A: High levels of ozone measured by monitors throughout ozone season have caused our non-attainment status. This is bad for business—it acts as an economic development deterrent and increases the cost for many businesses in the area to comply with air quality regulations. It also costs local governments money, in costs that they have to spend to meet additional transportation conformity regulations. And if we don't meet those regula-

tions, it impacts our federal funding for both highway and transit transportation projects. Finally, and in the long term most importantly, ozone is bad for our health and our children's health.

Q: What are the health effects of ground-level ozone?

A: Ozone is unhealthy to breathe, particularly among sensitive groups: children, people with asthma and other respiratory ailments and anyone who works or exercises vigorously outdoors. Ground-level ozone can cause acute respiratory problems, aggravate asthma, significantly decreases lung capacity, cause inflammation of lung tissue and impair the immune system. Symptoms of ozone exposure can include coughing, throat, lung, and eye irritation, chest pain, rapid and shallow breathing and asthma attacks.

Q: Are there any non-health related problems associated with ozone?

A: High ozone levels can damage leaves on trees and crops, reducing growth rates and crop yields. Ground-level ozone damages plant life and is responsible for \$500 million dollars in reduced crop production in the United States each year.

Q: What is an Ozone Action Day?

A: An Ozone Action Day occurs when ozone levels are forecasted to be a Code Orange, Red or Purple. On these

Air Quality	Protect your health
Good	No Health Notice - No health impacts expected when air quality is in this range.
Moderate	Limited Health Notice - Unusually sensitive people should consider limiting prolonged outdoor exertion.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Health Notice - Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.
Unhealthy	Health Advisory - Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.
Very Unhealthy	Health Alert - Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid all outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit outdoor exertion.



days, ozone concentrations are predicted to exceed the proposed federal standard of 0.08 parts per million averaged over an 8-hour period. When the NCDAQ expects ground-level ozone concentrations to reach or exceed the standard in one of the forecast areas, a forecast for an Ozone Action Day is issued, indicating the expected color code as well as the numerical AQI value.