



Maricopa County Air Quality Department

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CleanAirMakeMore.com



For Immediate Release

Commit to One Day, Help Keep Ozone Away Campaign

PHOENIX (April 16, 2019) – Maricopa County Air Quality Department (MCAQD) is announcing the start of its annual Ozone Campaign, encouraging county residents to help reduce the harmful pollutant during the spring and summer months.

Ground-level ozone forms when emissions from vehicles, gasoline and diesel equipment, industrial and chemical processes and other everyday activities react to sunlight. Naturally, ozone pollution is more prevalent during the spring and summer months because these emissions react more readily to sunlight.

Ground-level ozone pollution is harmful to lungs and can trigger asthma. Children are at the greatest risk from ozone because their lungs are still developing, are most likely to be active outdoors and are more likely than adults to have asthma. Adults with asthma or other lung diseases and older adults are also sensitive to ozone.

Although some people are more sensitive than others, all county residents can be affected by ground-level ozone. For this reason, MCAQD is urging residents to “Commit to One Day and Help Keep Ozone Away.”

“Because ozone is odorless and colorless, residents may not be aware of its harmful health impacts,” explained Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Gates, District 3. “But each one of us can make a difference by making simple changes to our routine at least one day a week. Whether that’s reducing our driving, taking light rail or the bus, refueling after dark or riding a bike to work, everyone has a role to play in reducing ozone concentrations and helping to keep our air clean.”

In 2015 the Environmental Protection Agency lowered the ozone health standard from 75 parts per billion (ppb) to 70 ppb. The revised 70 ppb standard resulted in more high pollution advisories (HPAs) and Health Watches (HWs) in Maricopa County. Last year Maricopa County experienced 76 days of ozone alerts, which included 40 consecutive days from July 11 to August 19. The county exceeded this revised ozone federal health standard 47 times.

“While the new, more stringent federal health standard for ozone triggers more HPAs the fact is that in the past two decades, Arizona has achieved significant improvements in our overall air quality and more specifically, lower ozone levels,” Maricopa County Air Quality Director Philip McNeely said. “We are expecting another long hot summer which means that all of us need to be vigilant. Each and every one of us can make a difference in improving the quality of the air we breathe through simple actions.”

To learn more about MCAQD’s *Commit to One Day* program or to sign up to receive air quality updates by email or text message, visit CleanAirMakeMore.com.

OZONE BACKGROUND: When exposed to sunlight, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) react to form ground-level ozone. Because of this, ground-level ozone is more prevalent April through September.

Ozone pollution prevention tips:

- Drive less. When possible, carpool, van pool or use public transportation.
- Avoid waiting in long drive-thru lines. Park your car and go inside.
- Ride your bike or walk to work.
- Refuel your vehicle after dark or during cooler evening hours.
- Use low-VOC or water-based paints, stains, finishes and paint strippers.
- Delay painting projects until high pollution advisories or health watches have passed.

For more information, contact Communications Supervisor Bob Huhn, (602) 506-6713.

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About Maricopa County Air Quality Department

The mission of the Maricopa County Air Quality Department is to improve the air of Maricopa County so customers, residents and visitors can live, work and play in a healthy environment. The department is governed by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors and follows air quality standards set forth by the federal Clean Air Act.

The department offers air quality information and resources on its *Clean Air Make More* website. Visit CleanAirMakeMore.com to learn more.

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