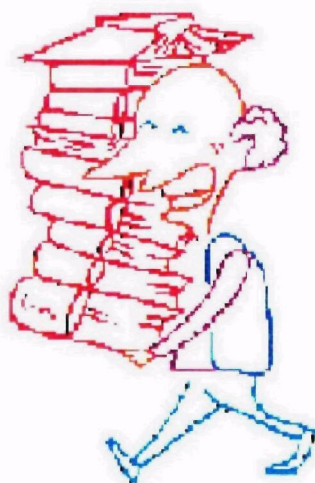


Protecting yourself from ozone smog pollution



Summer 1999



US Environmental Protection Agency

Region I, New England

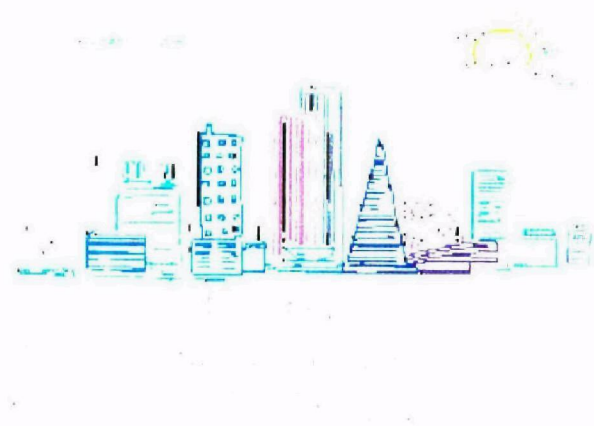
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WHAT IS OZONE?

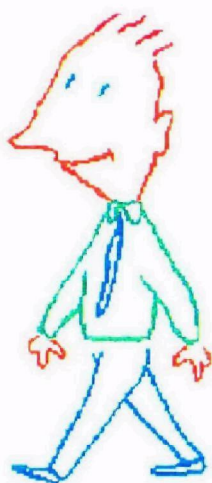
Ozone is a gas that can be found in the air we breathe. It can be both beneficial or harmful depending on its location in the atmosphere.

WHERE IS OZONE FOUND?

In the earth's upper atmosphere, the stratosphere, ozone shields the earth from the sun's ultraviolet rays. In the earth's lower atmosphere, the troposphere, it is called ground-level ozone and is a harmful air pollutant, the primary ingredient of smog.



HOW DOES OZONE AFFECT YOUR HEALTH?



High concentrations of ozone near ground level can be harmful to people, animals, crops and other materials. Ground-level ozone can cause shortness of breath, chest pains, coughing, wheezing, headaches, nausea, and

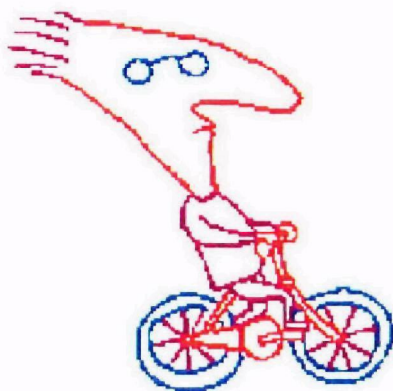
eye and throat irritation. People who suffer from lung diseases such as emphysema, bronchitis, pneumonia, or asthma can have even more trouble breathing when the air is polluted.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK FROM OZONE POLLUTION?

Four groups of people are particularly sensitive to ozone: 1) Children who are active outdoors;

2) Healthy adults who exert themselves outdoors; 3)

People with respiratory



diseases such as asthma; and 4) Healthy people with unusual susceptibility to ozone who experience more health effects than the average person.

During ozone alerts, adults with respiratory problems should avoid outdoor activities. Even healthy adults can suffer from high ozone levels during strenuous outdoor work or recreation. Children breathe even more air per pound of body weight than adults, therefore,

they are more susceptible to ozone.

O z o n e
aggravates
symptoms of
asthma in



children and adults. Children make up 25 percent of the population and comprise 40 percent of the asthma cases. Fourteen Americans die every day from asthma.



HOW CAN YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT OZONE LEVELS?

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state agencies have been developing a number of tools to provide information on local ozone levels, its potential health effects, and suggested activities for reducing ozone air pollution.

If you are interested in seeing an ozone map, which uses color contours to show ozone concentrations in your area, you can access this data at: www.epa.gov/airnow.

In the New England region, high ozone levels usually occur between 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. from May through September. A daily ozone forecast for New England is available at the US EPA Region I web site: www.epa.gov/region01/oms.

Citizens can sign up at the web address or call EPA's toll-free Air Quality Hotline at 1.800.821.1237 to receive smog alerts. Smog Alert is a free service provided by EPA which automatically notifies you by e-mail when high concentrations of ground-level ozone are predicted in your area.

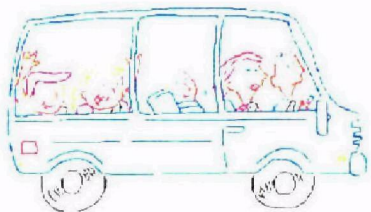
WHAT CAN YOU DO TO REDUCE OZONE LEVELS?

You can take a number of steps to help prevent ozone concentrations from reaching unhealthy levels:

☼ Avoid using gasoline powered engines, such as lawn mowers, chain saws, and leaf blowers on unhealthy air days.

☼ Tune-up your car, drive less, walk, ride a bike, use mass transit or carpool.

☼ Properly inflate your car's tires and check to make sure the wheels are aligned.



☼ Do not spill gasoline when filling the tank of your car or lawnmower.

☼ Fill your gas tank during the cooler evening hours on unhealthy air days.

☼ Tightly seal the lids of chemicals you use, such as solvents, garden chemicals, household cleaners.

☼ Use less electricity at home and work.

Remember, minor lifestyle changes can result in major air quality improvements.