

COLUMBUS SKYLINE



Air Quality

Quality of Life



Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
Air Quality Program

Why Should You Care About Air Quality?

Would you ever consider taking medicine without knowing what it was, the dosage amount, or the possible side effects? Of course not, but that's what you do every day with each breath you take! Every five seconds you inhale air into your lungs without thinking twice about its quality. But maybe you should. Could you be breathing in harmful pollutants that you can't see or smell? Could dirty air harm your health and the health of your children? Take a minute to learn more about the quality of the air you breathe every day.

Central Ohio Air Pollution

Central Ohio air contains two harmful pollutants:
ozone and fine particles

What is Ozone?

Ozone is the main gas that makes up smog. Ozone at the earth's surface is harmful to your health. Ground-level ozone should not be confused with the protective layer of ozone in the upper atmosphere, which screens out the sun's damaging ultraviolet rays.

Ozone pollution is mostly caused by cars, lawnmowers and other gasoline-burning engines. Ozone pollution occurs when the chemical emissions from these sources combine with sunlight. This is why ozone levels are highest on hot, sunny days during the summer.

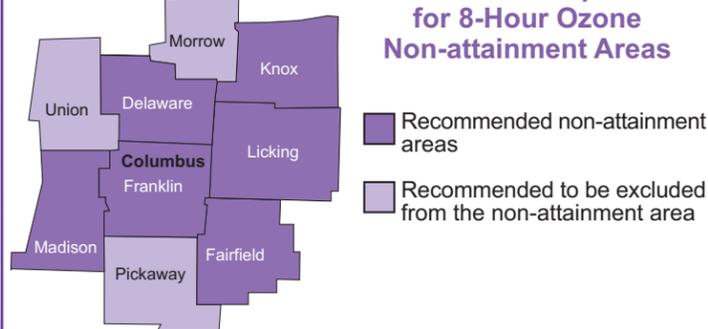
What are Fine Particles?

Fine particles are tiny solid particles and liquid droplets measuring less than 2.5 micrometers in size, or 1/20th the width of a human hair! Particle pollution comes from motor vehicles, power plants, industrial facilities and residential fireplaces.

Central Ohio's Air Quality Problem

Under the Clean Air Act of 1990, the U.S. EPA and Ohio EPA has classified six counties in central Ohio non-attainment for ozone pollution. This means that central Ohio's air does not meet minimum national air quality standards; standards that are designed to protect public health. To get back into attainment, both businesses and individuals will have to work hard to clean up our air by reducing industrial and automobile emissions and use cleaner burning fuels.

Ohio EPA Proposal for 8-Hour Ozone Non-attainment Areas



It all adds up to cleaner air

How Air Pollution Affects Your Health

High concentrations of Ozone and particle pollution in the air can make it difficult for all of us to breathe, especially older adults, young children, and those suffering from heart disease and respiratory problems such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema. When inhaled, ozone and particle pollution inflame and damage the cells that line our lungs, causing coughing, wheezing and serious asthma attacks in asthma sufferers. Also, numerous studies have linked particle pollution to various forms of heart disease and even premature death.

What Can You Do?

- ☀️ **Keep your car tuned up – regular tune-ups can improve fuel efficiency by 15 percent!**
- ☀️ **Conserve energy at home - use energy efficient light bulbs, insulate your home, turn off lights and appliances when you leave the room.**
- ☀️ **Combine your errands into one trip – trip chaining saves gas and vehicle wear and tear.**
- ☀️ **Refuel your car after 6 p.m. – since ozone needs sunlight to form, the vapors that escape when filling up are less likely to add to pollution levels.**
- ☀️ **Stop at the click! – topping off your gas tank when filling up releases unnecessary pollution into the air.**
- ☀️ **Try carpooling, vanpooling or riding the bus – over 50 percent of central Ohio's air pollution is contributed by cars.**
- ☀️ **Mow your lawn after 6 p.m. – also, consider purchasing electrically-powered lawn and garden equipment, which produce no pollution from exhaust emissions.**
- ☀️ **Try walking or biking to complete errands – it's FUN, costs less and good for your health.**
- ☀️ **Reduce or eliminate fireplace and wood stove use – also, try using gas logs instead of wood.**



Quality of Air = Quality of Life

Dirty air not only affects our health, but also reduces our quality of life. Economists estimate that air pollution costs us billions of dollars every year in health care and lost work time. In the future, central Ohio could be required to implement costly vehicle inspection programs and forfeit Federal highway dollars if we fail to meet U.S. EPA air quality standards.



A Forecast for Cleaner Air

What is the Air Quality Index?

MORPC uses the national Air Quality Index (AQI) to inform the public about daily ozone and particle pollution levels in central Ohio and how they can affect your health.

How do I use it?

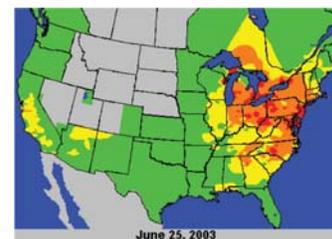
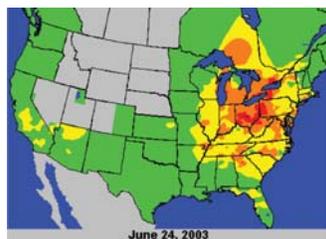
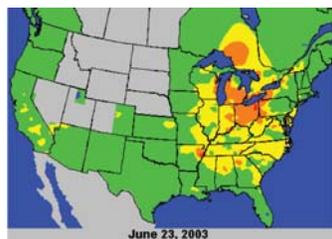
Think of the AQI as a yardstick that runs from 0 to 300. The higher the AQI value, the greater the health concern. When AQI levels reach above 100, air quality is considered to be unhealthy – at first for certain sensitive groups of people, then for everyone as AQI values rise. MORPC issues an Air Quality Alert to the public when pollution levels reach 101 or higher.

To help you quickly understand how local air quality can affect your health, the AQI is divided into five categories: Good, Moderate, Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, Unhealthy, and Very Unhealthy. In each level you will find the associated health effects and how you can reduce your exposure.

Where can I get daily AQI forecasts?

Visit <http://airquality.morpc.org> to view daily AQI forecasts.

To be notified of an Air Quality Alert by e-mail or fax, call **(614) 233-4126** or e-mail airquality@morpc.org.



Find out more

Visit airquality.morpc.org

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