

Is Oklahoma's Air OK?

There are days when Oklahoma's air isn't okay for everyone. The more we know about air pollution the more we recognize its effects on the human body. Though many healthy individuals may not experience symptoms of exposure, others can clearly tell when there's something in the air.

Air pollution affects children, older adults and persons with compromised respiratory and pulmonary systems at much lower concentrations than it affects the general public. Recognizing the symptoms of air pollution exposure could help you avoid the consequences of that exposure.

How do we know what's in the air?

DEQ's Air Quality Division developed and maintains a monitoring network across the state. We monitor for ozone, fine particulate matter, coarse particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, lead and specific toxic substances like mercury.

Much of today's monitoring is computerized. Concentrations for most substances are recorded every few minutes and reported hourly on our website.

But how will you know?

We've developed tools to help the public know more about Oklahoma's air. Every morning one of our meteorologists posts the air quality forecast for Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Lawton to our website. It's called the AQI or Air Quality Index and it is Oklahoma's contribution to a national air quality forecast. You can access it on our website.

If you only want to know when the air quality is impacted, then sign up for Air Quality Health Advisories. They are statewide email notifications that advise you when concentrations of air pollution are unhealthy for sensitive groups so you can determine your level of exposure and lessen the consequences.

For all these tools and more, visit and bookmark our website:
www.deq.ok.gov/air-quality-division/ambient-monitoring/aqi-ozone-watches-alerts-and-health-advisories/

You can also sign up to receive Ozone Alerts when the following day's AQI is forecast to be unhealthy for sensitive groups:

Tulsa: <https://ozonealert.com/>

Oklahoma City: www.acogok.org/transportation-planning/air-quality/ozone-alert-days/

Lawton: www.lawtonmpo.org/clean-air-lawton/



Do You Hold the Key to Cleaner Air?

Today's car manufacturers build automobiles that use cleaner fuel and are more efficient than ever before. There are a lot of things drivers can do to lower the emissions from their vehicles and most of them are simple and practical.

1. Don't idle your car.

When you drop your kids off for school or the library or little league, turn off your engine. You'll not only save gas, but you'll reduce your kids' and other people's exposure to vehicle exhaust. Keep this in mind when you use drive-through windows at banks, dry cleaners or fast food restaurants. When your vehicle is running, it's polluting the air whether your car is moving or not.

2. Get fuel when it's cool.

Refueling in the evening can prevent gas fumes from reacting with sunlight and creating ozone. This is especially important on hot, sunny days when vapors from your fuel tank become catalysts to ozone.

3. Don't top off the tank.

Topping off your gas tank releases gas fumes into the air and cancels the benefits of the pump's antipollution devices. So stopping short of a full tank is safe and reduces air pollution.

4. Trip chain.

Group your errands and activities so that you take fewer trips in your vehicle and get more out of every gallon of fuel that you use.

5. Take care of your car.

Regular maintenance, tune-ups, oil changes and checking tire pressure can improve gas mileage, extend your car's life and reduce your car's emissions. It may also reduce traffic congestion due to preventable breakdowns.

6. Be an example for others.

If you're looking for a school or community project, consider designating idle-free zones in your community. For the cost of a street sign, you can make a noticeable difference in the quality of the air you, your family and your entire community breathe.

