

Summer Air Quality & Fine Particles



A Message from the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency

What is fine particulate pollution?



Fine particles are solid or liquid particles from smoke, dust, and condensing vapors. PM is suspended and carried in the air for long periods and distances. PM pollution comes from a variety of sources, including dust

stirred up from traveling on unpaved and paved roadways, construction activities, gas and diesel powered engines, wood burning, outdoor burning, wildfires, and industrial/commercial operations.

What causes those hazy days of summer?

During summer, skies can become hazy. This haze is a combination of ground level ozone and fine particle pollution. Hot, calm weather patterns typically are present and contribute to poor visibility periods during summer. (Refer to ozone fact sheet for more information.)

What's being done to reduce fine particles?

A variety of strategies are being implemented at the national, state and local level to address fine particle pollution year around. In Spokane, the following programs have been successful in reducing fine particles:

- Road paving projects
- Outdoor burning restrictions
- Industrial emissions controls
- Cleaner diesel fuel and engines
- Wood stove curtailments/device upgrades
- "Cleaner" road sand/traction materials

Who's at risk from air pollution?

We are all at risk and to what degree depends upon several factors, including age, current health, and how much time we spend outdoors engaged in strenuous activity.

Children are at highest risk as their lungs are still developing. They are more likely to have asthma or other respiratory illnesses, and they are very active outdoors. Adults with asthma or other respiratory diseases are also at risk.

What should people do when air quality becomes unhealthy ?

- Limit outdoor activity.
- Exercise early in the morning or indoors.
- Pay attention to respiratory symptoms such as coughing, wheezing and discomfort, and see your doctor if necessary.

How do I find current pollution levels?

Spokane Clean Air monitors air quality via a network of air monitoring sites located throughout the county. The air quality is reported on the Air Quality Information Line, 477-2571, and at www.spokanecleanair.org.

How can we reduce fine particulates?

- Keep your vehicle well maintained.
- Avoid driving, or slow down, on unpaved roads.
- Use manual or electric yard and garden tools.
- Use a broom/dustpan rather than a leaf blower.
- Upgrade to a cleaner, wood or natural gas device before next heating season.

