

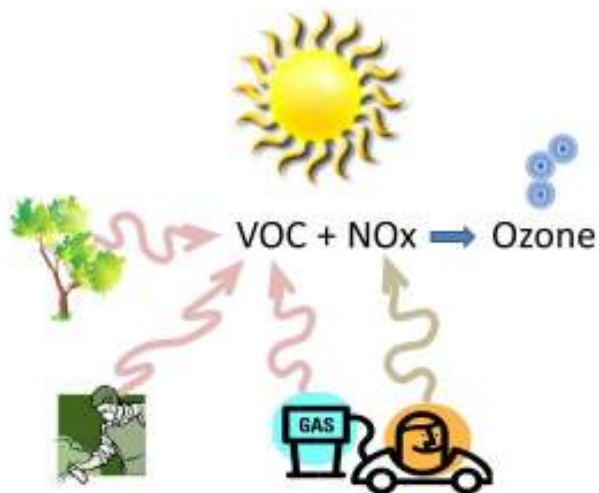
**NACAA Factsheet for
EPA's Revised Ozone Standard due out December 1, 2014
(as of November 25, 2014)**

EPA is proposing to revise the ozone standard. So, what does that mean?

What is ozone and why do we care about it?

Breathing in ground-level ozone can trigger a variety of health problems including chest pain, coughing, and throat irritation. It can worsen bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma. Ground-level ozone also can reduce lung function and inflame the linings of the lungs. Repeated exposure may permanently scar lung tissue. Even small amounts in the air can have harmful effects.

[Tailor this next sentence to an area's emissions as appropriate] Ozone is formed when chemicals from tailpipes and smokestacks react with sunlight. That's why ozone levels are at their highest during the summer in most parts of the country. Summertime is also when people are more active and spend more time outdoors, resulting in increased ozone exposure.



Can ozone be both good and bad?

Ozone can have good or bad effects, depending on where it's located in the atmosphere.

Close to the Earth's surface, ground-level or "bad" ozone is harmful to breathe and it damages crops, trees and other vegetation. It is a main ingredient of urban smog. High up in the atmosphere, stratospheric or "good" ozone protects life on Earth from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays.

One way to remember whether ozone is "good" or "bad" for us is, "good up high, bad nearby."

Why did EPA release a new draft standard now?

Under the Clean Air Act passed by Congress, EPA is required to review the health standards for certain pollutants every five years. As part of that review, they convene a group of independent scientific advisors, called CASAC (Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee) to review the latest health information and make a recommendation.

Most recently, CASAC has advised EPA that the current standard of 75 parts per billion (ppb) is not fully protective of public health and recommended a new stricter standard between 60 and 70 ppb. The Committee also expressed concerns that setting the standard at the high end of that range (70 ppb) might not provide an “adequate margin of safety” as required by the Clean Air Act.

What happens next?

EPA will consider public comments on the proposed standard and release a final standard in the fall of 2015. At that time, state and local clean air agencies will review their air quality data to see if the areas they serve are in compliance of the standard. EPA reviews the state recommendations and designates areas as either in compliance or not. Areas that are not in compliance (called nonattainment areas) are required to meet the standard as soon as possible. How long an area has to clean up the air is based on how severe their ozone pollution problem is.

What is the effect of being in ‘nonattainment?’

Besides the impacts on people’s health, nonattainment areas must, in some cases, require stricter pollution controls on sources of the chemicals that cause ozone pollution. This results in higher costs for the additional air pollution controls required, as well as costs for emission offsets for major new sources and costs for vehicle-inspection programs in the nonattainment area.

In addition, areas that take too long to clean up the problem can lose federal highway funding or be required to use those funds only on projects that don’t add to the pollution problem. Congress put both these potential consequences into the Clean Air Act to encourage states to move quickly to reduce ground-level ozone.

Added Option 1:

What can I do to help reduce ozone pollution?

We can all take steps to help reduce the chemicals that cause ozone to form. Carpooling, filling your gas tank after dusk and not topping off your tank can all help. *Add localized info as appropriate.*

Added Option 2:

Does EPA look at the costs of a new standard?

Under the Clean Air Act, (as interpreted by a unanimous Supreme Court decision), EPA cannot consider the costs when setting the ozone standard. EPA can and does consider costs in reviewing the best, cost effective ways for states to clean up the air and meet any new standard.

Over the last 40 years, the benefits under Clean Air standards from reduced loss of life, increased productivity and reduced health care costs have far outweighed the costs of cleaning the air.

Option 2A. Add this to 2:

While some groups have complained about the costs of air pollution standards, there is a history of innovation under the Clean Air Act. This consistently results in much lower costs of compliance than projected by industry groups when the standards are first proposed or released.

Added Option 3:

Where can I learn more about ozone?

Link to state or local agency

2013 Measurements of Ground Level Ozone Air Quality.

source: <http://www.epa.gov/airtrends/values.html>

