

It's Your Environment: Protect It!

Lesson One: It's Ozone Season

Those warm, sunny days are back and so are the air pollution issues that accompany them.

Last year, Oklahoma had 59 days when concentrations of ozone were unhealthy for sensitive groups and though you may not be one of these sensitive individuals, we're pretty sure you know someone who is.



Sensitive groups include:

- Children because their respiratory systems are just developing
- Older individuals who suffer chronic or acute respiratory illnesses
- Persons with asthma or other respiratory disease

Other individuals who need to know about Oklahoma's air quality:

- Construction workers, road crews, farmers and ranchers – those who work outdoors and are exposed to the air for long periods of time
- Teachers in charge of students who go outside for recess
- Coaches who train young athletes
- Runners whose routes expose them to fuel exhaust from vehicles

The Air Quality Division will monitor ozone at 17 sites in Oklahoma this year. Those sites report ozone concentrations hourly. We use that data to inform the public of both current and anticipated air quality. Here are three tools that let you access that information.

- **AQI** – A daily forecast of air quality for Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Lawton. Located in the upper right hand corner of almost every Air Quality Division web page.
- **Ozone Alerts & Watches** – These are forecasts for the next day's air quality and are posted on our website as a banner or you can receive email notifications by signing up with one of our partners:
 - Oklahoma City: www.bettertogetherok.org
 - Tulsa: www.ozonealert.com/index.htm
 - Lawton: www.enviroflash.info/signup.cfm

- **Air Quality Health Advisories** – These are near real-time notifications when concentrations of ozone or other air pollutants reach unhealthy levels anywhere in the state. Sign Up at: www.deq.state.ok.us/aqdnew/AdvisorySignUp.htm

Everyone is affected by the quality of our air. Which people in particular are likely to be affected by air pollution?

- A) young children
- B) elderly adults
- C) people who frequently exercise or work outdoors
- D) individuals who suffer from pre-existing respiratory conditions
- E) All of the above

Who needs to know about Oklahoma's air quality?

- A) Football Coaches
- B) Teachers
- C) Moms and Dads
- D) Little League Coaches
- E) All of the above

Where can you find daily air quality information?

- A) Weather page
- B) News
- C) OK DEQ Air Quality Web page
- D) Sesame Street

Kids can learn more about Oklahoma's air through DEQ's new Environmental Education Supplement which has just been published by Newspapers in Education. Those materials are also available on our website: www.deq.state.ok.us/aqdnew/education



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