

Air Quality Flag Program

Summer 2019 Newsletter



Ozone Season Has Begun

Higher ozone levels tend to become an issue in most areas of the country from March through November. [Ozone at ground level](#) is a harmful air pollutant that forms when pollutants emitted by cars, power plants, industrial boilers, refineries, chemical plants, and other sources react chemically in the presence of heat and sunlight.

Protect yourself and your community:

- Check the Air Quality Index to find out how much pollution is in the air (www.airnow.gov) and fly your flags.
- Use the [Activity Guidelines](#) when exercising and working outside.
- Do outdoor activities early in the morning and after 6 pm to avoid the highest ozone levels.
- Pay attention to breathing or lung problems you might have.

Spring Challenge Results



Welcome to all our new Flag Program participants! This year we had 10 different groups competing to register the most organizations with the program. Everyone did a great job! The top three winners were:

1. Region 4 in conjunction with the Nashville/Davidson Metro Public Health Dept, the American Lung Association, Tennessee Department of Health, TN Department of Environment & Conservation, The Allergy, Asthma & Sinus Center, and Cumberland Pediatrics Foundation
2. Region 3 in partnership with MACCHE, the PA Asthma partnership, VA DEQ and PA DEP
3. Broward County, FL

The winning teams will get a letter of recognition and certificate, and a set of flags goes to our first-place winner. Compliments to all the teams for their hard work!

On another note, we've gotten some feedback that May might not be the best time for a participant challenge. We're currently looking at options that include dates earlier in the spring (which would include Earth Day) or in the fall. Please let us know by emailing AQFlagProgram@epa.gov if you have an opinion as we explore possibilities.

Air Quality Guide for Ozone

Ground-level ozone is one of our nation's most common air pollutants. Use the chart below to help reduce your exposure and protect your health. For your local air quality, visit www.airnow.gov.

Air Quality Index	Who Needs to be Concerned?	What Should I Do?
Good (0-50)		It's a great day to be active outside.
Moderate (51-100)	Some people who may be unusually sensitive to ozone.	Unusually sensitive people: Consider reducing prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath. There are steps to take a step. Everyone else: It's a good day to be active outside.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101-150)	Sensitive groups include people with lung disease such as asthma, older adults, children and teenagers, and people who are active outdoors.	Sensitive groups: Reduce prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Take more breaks, do less intense activities. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath. School and outdoor activities in the morning when ozone is lower. People with asthma: should follow their asthma action plans and keep quick-relief medicine handy.
Unhealthy (151-200)	Everyone	Sensitive groups: Avoid prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Schedule outdoor activities in the morning when ozone is lower. Consider moving activities indoors. People with asthma: keep quick-relief medicine handy. Everyone else: Reduce prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Take more breaks, do less intense activities. Schedule outdoor activities in the morning when ozone is lower.
Very Unhealthy (201-300)	Everyone	Sensitive groups: Avoid all physical activity outdoors. Move activities indoors or postpone for a time when air quality is better. People with asthma: keep quick-relief medicine handy. Everyone else: Avoid prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Schedule outdoor activities in the morning when ozone is lower. Consider moving activities indoors.
Hazardous (301-500)	Everyone	Everyone: Avoid all physical activity outdoors.

Note: If you don't have an air conditioner, staying inside with the windows closed may be dangerous in extremely hot weather. In these cases, seek alternative shelter.

Creative Communication

How does your organization communicate the Air Quality Index and the state of the air every day? During Air Quality Awareness Week (April 29- May 3), the city of Nashville, TN came up with highly visible ways to create interest in air quality.



The road sign above the highway says, "Air Quality Awareness Week: Reduce Trips" A local school posted this on the sign outside the school:



Way to be innovative, City of Nashville and Inglewood Elementary!

Does your organization have public space where you can share information on air quality and what to do when the air quality is poor? If so, please pass them along to AQFlagProgram@epa.gov and you may be featured in an upcoming newsletter!

AQFP Postcard

Planning outreach events for the summer and fall? Use the AQFP postcards to share the flag program message! Order your supply for free through NSCEP at <http://www.epa.gov/nscep> and search for 456F18003.



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