

April 27 – May 1, 2015 is [Air Quality Awareness Week](#). Improve your Air Quality IQ. Learn about air pollutants this week and what you can do to improve air quality in New Jersey.

Monday, April 27: [Ozone](#): Good Up High, Bad Nearby

Did You Know? Ozone is a gas that is found in the Earth's upper atmosphere and at ground-level. Ozone found in the upper atmosphere, stratosphere, is good because it protects the earth from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. Ozone near the ground is bad for humans, plants, and many materials. Elevated levels occur with the onset of warm weather, typically May 1 through September 30.

"Bad" ozone (smog) is formed by chemical reactions between [nitrogen oxides \(NO_x\)](#) and [volatile organic compounds \(VOCs\)](#) in the presence of sunlight. Emissions from motor vehicle exhaust, industrial facilities and electric utilities, gasoline vapors, and chemical solvents are some of the major sources of oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds. Breathing "bad" ozone can trigger health problems, such as chest pain, coughing, throat irritation, and congestion. It can worsen bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma.

Actions: Take these actions to reduce the amount of "bad" ozone:

- Conserve or reduce energy at home and the office. Participate in your local utilities' energy conservation programs. This will reduce the pollution from power plants.
- Keep cars, trucks, gas-powered lawn and garden equipment properly tuned and maintained to reduce air pollution
- Fill your gas tank during the cooler evening hours and be careful not to spill gasoline.
- Reduce driving. Carpool, use public transportation, walk, or bicycle to reduce ozone pollution, especially on hot summer days.
- Use household and garden chemicals wisely. Use paints and solvents with little or no volatile organic compounds. Be sure to read labels for proper use and disposal.

For more information, visit www.cleanair.nj.gov

Get the daily AQI forecast. Sign up for EnviroFlash, (www.enviroflash.info), a free online alert system, that delivers air quality information straight to your email inbox or cell phone. Check the Air Quality Index (AQI) for your local air quality. This enables you avoid overexertion on bad air days. If the air is unhealthy, limit physical exertion outdoors and change the time of day of strenuous outdoor activity to early morning or late evening.

NJ Rules and Program(s) to Reduce Your Exposure: New Jersey's Air Quality; <http://www.njaqinow.net/>, [N.J.A.C. 7:27-24, "Prevention of Air Pollution from Consumer Products"](#).

For all of New Jersey's air quality facts, and suggested actions for the week, go to <http://www.nj.gov/dep/aqaweek/>

Sincerely,

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