

# Air Quality Delaware Partnership

[www.wilmapco.org/aqp](http://www.wilmapco.org/aqp)

The Air Quality Partnership of Delaware is a group of public and private organizations whose mission is to educate Delawareans about measures that can be taken to improve air quality on Air Quality Action Days.

The Partners: American Lung Association in DE, Bayshore Ford, Chesapeake Utilities, Clean Air Council, DART First State, Delaware Ecumenical Council, Delmarva Broadcasting, DNREC, Dover/Kent County MPO, DE Division of Public Health, RideShare Delaware, TMA Delaware, and WILMAPCO

To notify you of days when the air quality is expected to be dangerous, a color coded alert system has been created.

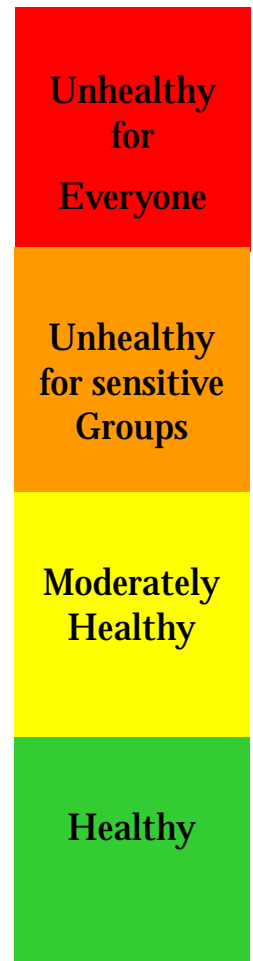
**Code Red**—is when we all need to take action to protect our health and reduce ozone. Usually, if temperatures are cooler, a **Code Red** is forecasted. These are called **Air Quality Action Days**.

**Code Orange**—means it may be unhealthy for certain people to be outside.

Days with hotter temperatures, when ozone reaches dangerous levels, a **Code Orange** or **Code Red** is forecasted.

**Green** or **Yellow** is forecasted when health risks are low.

If you would like to receive Air Quality Alerts or join the partnership, please visit our website [www.wilmapco.org/aqp](http://www.wilmapco.org/aqp)



## Ozone

- While the air in our region always has some pollutants, in the summer months the problem becomes much worse.
- As high temperatures and sunlight combine with the pollution in the air, they create ground-level ozone or smog.
- When ozone levels are high, it is difficult for people to breathe, especially children and the elderly.
- Recent studies show that ground level ozone can cause respiratory problems and bring on asthma attacks.
- Even healthy adults exercising outdoors can experience health problems such as coughing, wheezing, and chest pains. Long-term exposure can even damage your lungs.

Support the Air Quality Partnership of Delaware in helping to reduce the dangers of poor air quality.



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## TIPS for Air Quality Action Days

**Trip chain more often.** It's easy! Chances are, you're already doing it -- combining your errands into one trip. It helps you get things done and it helps reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. When you first start a car after it's been sitting for more than an hour, it pollutes up to five times more than when the engine's warm.

## Particulate Matter

Particulate Matter refers to tiny particles that are emitted into the air.

- Our region was determined to be in non-attainment for Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5).
- This means the particles are 2.5 microns, about 1/14 the width of a human hair.
- Because they are so small, they get imbedded into the lining of our lungs and cause serious health problems.
- Unlike ozone, PM2.5 levels don't rely on sunlight to create unhealthy air. They can reach dangerous levels any time during the day and all year round.

In addition to respiratory problems, exposure to PM can cause cardio damage as well.

**Take mass transit, share a ride, or car pool.** Even if you do it just once or twice a week, you'll reduce traffic congestion and pollution, and save money. The average driver spends about 56 cents per mile including ownership and maintenance.

**Have fun! Ride your bike.** It's a great way to travel and it can help you and the air get into condition. Vehicles on the road create more than 25% of all air pollution nationwide.

**Care for your car.** Regular maintenance and tune-ups, changing the oil, and checking tire inflation can improve gas mileage, extend your car's life, and increase its resale value. It can also reduce traffic congestion due to preventable breakdowns and it could reduce your car's emissions by more than half.

**Get fuel when it's cool.** Refueling during cooler periods of the day or in the evening can prevent gas fumes from heating up and creating ozone. And that can help reduce ozone alert days.

**Don't top off the tank.** It releases gas fumes into the air, which cancels the benefits of the pump's anti-pollution devices. So, stopping short of a full tank keeps gas off of you, is safer, and reduces pollution.