



1410 N. Hilton
Boise, ID 83706
208-373-0502

www.deq.idaho.gov

Boise Regional
Office:
(208) 373-0550

July 2008

Ozone In the Treasure Valley: What Businesses and Governments Can Do

Ozone is an odorless, colorless gas that forms in the atmosphere when three atoms of oxygen are combined. Ozone is not emitted directly into the air, but is created by a chemical reaction between oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of heat and strong sunlight.

Because the Treasure Valley experiences hot, sunny summers, it provides the ideal setting for the formation of ground-level ozone. The pollutants that cause ozone come from motor vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, gasoline vapors, chemical solvents, and vegetation.

Businesses and governments can help prevent ground-level ozone from forming in the Treasure Valley and improve air quality in general. This flyer lists a number of options of ways to help. Not all options are appropriate for all businesses or government agencies, nor are you being asked to do everything listed here. If each business or agency takes just one or two actions, the results will add up quickly.*

Lawn and Grounds Maintenance

Gasoline-powered lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and trimmers are large sources of air pollution. Businesses that care for the grounds where they are located (either by doing the work themselves or contracting the work out) can impact air quality by their actions.

- Use electric or manual lawn mowers, trimmers, and other lawn-care equipment (best for small lawns).
- If using gasoline-powered lawn tools, only mow and trim on days when the air quality is forecast to be good (the Air Quality Index is "green").
- Reduce lawn areas (so less mowing is necessary); landscape with native, water-tolerant plants.
- Use gas cans that indicate they meet California Air Resources Board's requirements for portable fuel containers.
- Store gasoline-powered lawn equipment out of the heat and sunlight to prevent fuel evaporation.
- Keep gasoline-powered lawn equipment well maintained. Change the oil, clean or replace filters regularly, get tune-ups, maintain sharp blades, and keep underside of deck clean.
- If you contract out for lawn care, include the above in the contract.

Building Maintenance

Many chemical products, such as paints and cleaners, contain VOCs. Keeping VOCs out of our air helps keep ozone from forming.

- Use products that are VOC-free or only contain small amounts of VOCs (look for labels that say "low-VOC" or "zero-VOC").
- Only use VOC-containing products on days when the air quality is forecast to be good ("green").
- If you contract out for building maintenance, include the above in the contract.

* You will find additional details, sample policies, etc. on the accompanying pages and compact disk. All samples and information on the disk can be downloaded, copied, and modified to fit your agency's or company's needs.

Employee Commutes

Exhaust from vehicles on our roads is one of the largest contributors to ozone-causing chemicals. Encouraging your employees to modify their commutes to and from work can reduce these chemicals in our air.

While reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled (such as through carpooling or biking) is ideal, changes in habits such as turning off vehicles (not idling) when stopped for more than 10 to 30 seconds (such as when in a drive-through) or driving during off-peak hours help keep pollutant levels down.

- Develop an official policy that encourages employees to use alternative transportation (sample policy enclosed).
- Assign a staff member to be your employee transportation coordinator to assist employees with alternative transportation, such as finding carpool partners and/or in getting connected with Valley Regional Transit and ACHD Commuteride.
- Purchase bus passes or pay Commuteride (vanpool) fares for employees.
- Reward employees for using alternative transportation with prizes or incentive programs (ideas and details enclosed).
- Provide locker-room facilities for employees who ride their bikes or walk to work. If you don't have this capability, consider partnering with a nearby facility that does.
- Provide secure bike racks for employees and customers.
- Provide preferred parking for carpoolers.
- Encourage employees to telecommute; develop a company-wide policy on how and when telecommuting is appropriate (sample policy enclosed).
- Encourage employees to work alternative shifts (fewer days per week, such as 4, 10-hour days, or early/late shifts at the office to reduce traffic during peak times) (sample policy enclosed).
- Encourage employees to not idle when sitting in their vehicles.

Employee Transportation While on the Job

Even after employees have finished their commute and arrive at their place of employment, their jobs often dictate they travel around the valley.

- Keep fleet vehicles well-maintained (appropriate tire pressure, regular tune-ups, etc.).
- Remind employees to avoid "topping off" the tank when fueling.
- Encourage employees to use conference calls, especially on days with poor air quality, instead of driving across town for meetings.
- Encourage employees to carpool to meetings.
- Develop a no-idle policy for fleet vehicles (sample policy enclosed).
- Join *Clean Air Zone* and develop a no idle policy for company grounds (sample policy and information on *Clean Air Zone* enclosed).
- Use mapping software to determine the most efficient driving route, especially if a driver will be making several stops.
- Consider fuel economy when purchasing new fleet vehicles.

Daily Air Quality Reports on the Web: www.deq.idaho.gov/air/aqindex.cfm