

# *Boise Regional Office*

# **Air Quality Awareness Week**

**May 2–6, 2016**



The Treasure Valley experiences air pollution problems in the summer months with stagnant air conditions, heat, and intense sunlight combining to produce unhealthful accumulations of ozone pollution. Ozone is an odorless, colorless gas that forms in the atmosphere when three atoms of oxygen are combined. It can be helpful or harmful, depending on where it is located.

- Ozone in the upper atmosphere, or stratosphere, is good. Up high, it is natural and helps protect us from the sun's ultraviolet rays.
- Ozone at ground level is bad. Near the surface of the earth, in the air we breathe, ozone is unnatural, hazardous to our health, and an air pollutant.

Pollutants that cause ozone come from motor vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, gasoline vapors, chemical

solvents, and vegetation. The reactivity of ozone causes health problems because it damages lung tissue, reduces lung function, and sensitizes the lungs to other irritants. Scientific evidence indicates that ambient levels of ozone not only affect people with impaired, such as asthmatics, but healthy adults and children as well.

DEQ monitors and measures air pollutants, including ozone, throughout Idaho. Based on these data and meteorological conditions, DEQ issues air quality alerts using a system called the Air Quality Index. Daily air quality conditions may be viewed at [deq.idaho.gov/daily-air-quality-reports-forecasts](http://deq.idaho.gov/daily-air-quality-reports-forecasts).

For more information, visit

[deq.idaho.gov/air-quality/air-pollutants/criteria-pollutants/ozone/](http://deq.idaho.gov/air-quality/air-pollutants/criteria-pollutants/ozone/)  
[deq.idaho.gov/regional-offices-issues/boise/air-quality-plans-reports/](http://deq.idaho.gov/regional-offices-issues/boise/air-quality-plans-reports/)

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