

Protecting Idaho's air quality means protecting your health.

Your health is a precious commodity, and breathing healthy air is central to living a long, healthy life. Air in Idaho is of high quality, but pollution from natural events or human activities can present health risks at times. During the summer, for example, smoke from wildfires can make breathing difficult or ground-level ozone may form on hot, sunny days. During the winter, inversions can trap emissions from vehicles and industrial sources near the ground. By taking a few easy steps, we can all help protect Idaho's air and our personal health.

Knowledge is power! Learn how to protect your health and Idaho's air quality. This brochure identifies the two most common air pollutants in Idaho and their potential health effects, explains how air quality is reported, and provides tips on protecting Idaho's air and the health of all Idahoans.



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DEQ Web Resources

Daily Air Quality Reports and Forecasts
www.deq.idaho.gov/daily-air-quality-reports-forecasts

Real-Time Air Monitoring
airquality.deq.idaho.gov/

Air Quality Index
www.deq.idaho.gov/air-quality-monitoring

Particulate Matter
www.deq.idaho.gov/particulate-matter

Ozone
www.deq.idaho.gov/ozone

Burning and Smoke Management
www.deq.idaho.gov/open-burning



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Healthy Air, Healthy Idahoans



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Two Common Air Pollutants and Their Health Impacts

Particulate Matter

Particulate matter describes small particles in the air, including dust, dirt, soot, smoke, and liquid droplets. Sources include vehicles, industrial facilities, construction and farm equipment, unpaved roads, burning, wood stoves, wildfires, and windblown dust.

Symptoms of exposure may include sore throat, persistent cough, burning eyes, shortness of breath, and chest pain. The elderly and children are especially vulnerable as are people with respiratory illnesses. People of all ages who are active outdoors may be at increased risk.

Ground-Level Ozone

Ozone is an odorless, colorless gas created by a chemical reaction between nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds in the presence of heat and strong sunlight. Pollutants that cause ozone come from motor vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, gasoline vapors, chemical solvents, and vegetation. Hot, sunny weather is ideal for ground-level ozone formation.



Inhaling ozone can cause airway irritation, coughing, rapid or shallow breathing, discomfort when breathing, or general chest discomfort. Ozone can aggravate respiratory diseases, reduce lung function, and damage lung tissue. Breathing ozone is bad for everyone but is most harmful to children, adults who are active outdoors, and people with respiratory diseases.



What You Can Do to Protect Air Quality

- **Tune your car.** A poorly maintained car uses more gas per mile, polluting the air and costing you money. Check air and fuel filters, tire pressure, and spark plugs.
- **Drive less.** Ride the bus, carpool, or bike. Combine trips when driving.
- **Refuel your car in the evening.** Cooler temperatures are less conducive to ground-level ozone formation.
- **Don't top off your tank.** Avoid fuel spills and always tighten the gas cap securely.
- **Limit idling.** Shut off your engine if you will be sitting in your car longer than 10 seconds.
- **Maintain gas-powered lawn and garden equipment.** Better yet, replace with electric alternatives.
- **Avoid burning when possible.** Always comply with local burning ordinances. Never burn human-made garbage such as plastics.
- **Limit use of products that contribute to air pollution.** Use paints and solvents when air quality is good.
- **Use less energy.** Generating electricity creates air pollution. Reduce energy use to curb greenhouse gas emissions and save money!
- **Get involved.** Encourage your community to join DEQ's anti-idling program, *Clean Air Zone Idaho*.



Understand the Air Quality Index (AQI)

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a standard nationwide guide for reporting daily air quality. The AQI lets you know when to take measures to protect your health.

Air Quality	Actions to Protect Your Health	AQI
Good	None	0-50
Moderate	Sensitive people should consider limiting prolonged outdoor exertion.	51-100
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Everyone should limit exertion outdoors.	101-150
Unhealthy	Everyone should limit exertion.	151-200
Very Unhealthy	Limit any exertion.	201-300
Hazardous	Stay indoors and avoid any exertion.	>300

What You Can Do to Protect Your Health

- **Stay informed.** Visit DEQ's website and sign up to get daily AQI information delivered to your e-mail.
 -  [Subscribe to this page](#)
- **Avoid prolonged exposure.** Stay inside as much as possible and keep the doors and windows closed if air quality is poor.
- **Modify your workout.** Walk instead of run or exercise inside. Ozone concentrations are generally lower in the morning and highest from 4-6 p.m.
- **Pay attention to symptoms.** See a doctor if you experience coughing, throat irritation, chest discomfort, or difficulty breathing when air quality is poor.