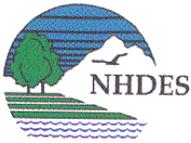


News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Declares Air Quality Action Day Unhealthy Air Pollution Levels Predicted for Today

Concord, NH -- Air pollution concentrations are expected to reach unhealthy levels **throughout the state today, May 25**. State officials are calling for an Air Quality Action Day and advise all individuals -- especially active children and adults and people with heart disease or respiratory conditions such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis -- to take precautions to protect their health.

The N.H. Department of Environmental Services (DES) expects concentrations of fine particle pollution to be unhealthy for sensitive individuals statewide. These particles can cause adverse health effects in people with heart or lung disease and may also reduce visibility. Particles from forest fires in the southeastern part of this country, together with particle pollution from the Midwest, are contributing to these unhealthy air quality conditions.

In addition, ozone, the primary ingredient in smog, is expected to reach unhealthy levels at elevations above 3,000 ft. Moderate concentrations of ozone are expected in the remainder of the state. The combination of the two pollutants may intensify health effects.

Unhealthy conditions are expected to continue into Saturday morning, but should improve later on Saturday as slightly cleaner air moves into the region. DES will continue to monitor air pollution levels through the Memorial Day weekend and will alert the public if unhealthy air quality is expected to continue.

Fine particle pollution can significantly aggravate existing diseases such as asthma and bronchitis. The severity of the health effects increases as fine particle and ozone concentrations increase. Symptoms of ozone exposure include coughing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain when inhaling deeply, and shortness of breath. Active children and adults and people with heart or respiratory disease should limit prolonged outdoor activity. Even individuals with healthy respiratory systems may experience mild symptoms of lung irritation at higher ozone levels and should limit strenuous or prolonged outdoor activities.

For further information about potential adverse health effects from particle pollution and ozone exposure, contact DES at (603) 271-4664. For air quality forecasts and current air pollution levels in New Hampshire, call 1-800-935-SMOG or visit the DES website at www.airquality.nh.gov.

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