

Ozone Advance Fact Sheet

What is Ozone?

In the upper atmosphere, ozone (O₃) protects earth from harmful ultraviolet rays but at ground level it is the main component of smog. Ozone is not emitted directly into the air but is formed through chemical reactions between natural and man-made emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) in the presence of heat and sunlight.

Ozone facts:

1 in 10 children and 1 in 13 adults in Central Texas suffer from asthma

What is Ozone Advance?

Ozone Advance is a collaborative, voluntary effort between U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), states, tribes, and local governments to encourage reductions of NO_x and VOC emissions to help areas remain in attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Why should we make the effort to curb ozone-forming emissions?

Our region experiences days when ozone levels are unhealthy, and we are very close to being out of attainment of the ozone health standard. If this happens, we will lose local control of our air quality planning and will be subject to requirements that may not be well-suited to Central Texas. Taking voluntary actions to reduce ozone now will benefit public health while minimizing our regulatory burden. Central Texas also has an opportunity to maximize ozone reductions while reaping environmental co-benefits.

Ozone facts:

1 out of every 6 days in September in Central Texas have unhealthy ozone levels

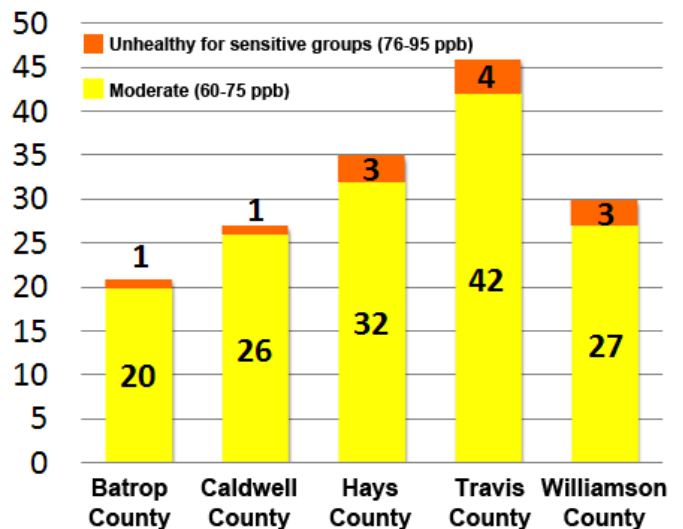
What are we doing about ozone-forming emissions now?

Ozone Advance is the latest in a series of voluntary, collaborative, air quality improvement plans the region has undertaken over the past decade. It builds on the successes of previous plans and prepares our region for the challenges of maintaining the ozone NAAQS. A group of elected officials from local governments throughout Central Texas is reviewing our existing plan (the 8-Hour Ozone Flex) in preparation for selecting the emission measures for Ozone Advance.

Why is ozone a problem for Central Texas?

As the graph below shows, all of the counties in Central Texas regularly experiences ozone levels which are moderately unhealthy. In addition, we also see a small but persistent number of days with ozone levels that are considered unhealthy for sensitive groups, which includes the elderly; people with asthma and other breathing problems; and children. The current ozone standard used by EPA is 75 ppb.

Number of Days with Unhealthy Ozone Levels in 2012 (based on current air quality index)



To learn more visit:

www.capcog.org/ozoneadvance