



MEDIA FACT SHEET

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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About the Clean Air Partnership of Middle Tennessee

The Clean Air Partnership of Middle Tennessee is a nonprofit organization focused on air quality in the eight-county area (Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson counties). CAP works to encourage lifestyle changes by promoting concepts like carpooling, mass transit and regular car maintenance. From issuing Air Quality Alert notices to matching rideshare partners, CAP is a one-stop information source connecting people with the resources they need to make smart transportation choices. Visit the Clean Air Partnership at www.cleanairpartnership.info.

Air Quality – Why It Matters

Air quality is an important HEALTH issue. Two types of pollutants tend to be the worst in Middle Tennessee – ozone and particle pollution. Ozone is the biggest problem in the summer months, but particle pollution can be high any time of the year.

OZONE

Ground-level ozone is formed when emissions from cars, power plants, lawn mowers and other sources chemically react with sunlight. It can harm our health, particularly on hot, sunny days when ozone reaches high levels.

People most vulnerable to ground-level ozone:

- Children
- Adults who are active outdoors
- People with respiratory disease, such as asthma
- People with chronic heart or lung disease

Health effects of ozone:

- Coughing
- Throat irritation
- Chest discomfort
- Reduced lung function
- Increased asthma attacks
- Inflammation and damage to the lungs' lining

PARTICLE POLLUTION

Tiny particles in the air that are emitted from the burning of fuels (cars, lawnmowers, power plants, wood fires, etc.) are linked to a number of health problems.

People most vulnerable to particle pollution:

- People with heart or lung disease
- Adults who are active outdoors
- Older adults
- Children

Health effects of particle pollution:

- Aggravated asthma
- Increases in respiratory symptoms (coughing; difficult or painful breathing)
- Chronic bronchitis
- Decreased lung function
- Premature death

Poor air quality affects thousands of people in Middle Tennessee. In Davidson County alone, there are:

- **13,000** children and **38,000** adults who have asthma
- **19,000** people who have chronic bronchitis
- **8,000** people who have emphysema
- **30,000** people who are 75 and older
- **145,000** people who are 19 and younger*

* American Lung Association *State of the Air 2008 Report*; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 statistics

Air Quality – What Your Viewers/Readers/Listeners Need To Know

AIR QUALITY ALERTS

If an Air Quality Alert is forecast for the following day, include it in your news coverage. If your audience is armed with the knowledge that the next day is an Air Quality Alert day, they will be able to plan ahead to protect their health and reduce emissions.

PROTECT HEALTH

People are often aware of Air Quality Alerts when they occur, but they do not understand what an alert means for them. Along with announcing Air Quality Alerts, it is important that the alerts be accompanied by information about which groups are affected, and a few simple steps that people can take to protect their health:

On ozone days:

- Limit prolonged or heavy exertion outdoors.
- Plan outdoor activities for a time of day when ozone levels are typically lowest, usually in the morning or evening. The highest ozone levels usually occur from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. in Middle Tennessee.

On particle pollution days:

- Avoid exercising near busy roads where particle pollution is generally more elevated.
- Limit prolonged or heavy exertion outdoors.
- Plan outdoor activities for days when particle levels are lower.

TAKE ACTION

It is also important to let people know what they can do to help reduce emissions, especially on Air Quality Alert days:

On ozone days:

- Carpool or take the train or bus.
- Combine errands into a single trip.
- Reduce or postpone trips by car.
- Reduce idling: Avoid driving during peak traffic times; skip the drive-thru and go inside.
- Refuel your car after dusk.

On particle pollution days:

- Avoid activities that emit particles into the air, such as grilling out, using gas-powered lawn tools, or using a wood stove.
- See “ozone days” tips.

DIRECT YOUR AUDIENCE TO THE CAP WEB SITE

If space or time is limited in your news coverage of Air Quality Alert days, we encourage you to direct your audience to the Clean Air Partnership Web site (www.cleanairpartnership.info). The CAP Web site provides links to sign up for Air Quality Alerts, tips and other information about air quality.

Media Availability

The Clean Air Partnership is available as a resource for your news coverage of air quality. For interviews with a Clean Air Partnership representative, contact communications director Melissa Stevens at (615) 653-9022.