



MEDIA FACT SHEET

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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Who are we?

The Clean Air Partnership of Middle TN is a non-profit air quality alert program led by a committee of stakeholders from state and local government, non-profit organizations, and educational and corporate institutions including American Lung Association, Vanderbilt University, the Tennessee Department of Health, the Metro Public Health Department, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, the Tennessee Department of Transportation, TVA, MTA, TMA Group and others.

What is our mission?

The Clean Air Partnership of Middle Tennessee is focused on increasing ridesharing and educating the public on how small changes in individual behavior can have a big impact on air quality in our area.

Why is air quality important?

Air pollution is a problem for everyone. The average adult breathes about 3,400 gallons of air a day. Children are at greater risk to injury from air pollution because they are more active outdoors and their lungs are still developing. The elderly are also more sensitive to air pollution because they often have heart or lung disease. People with asthma are especially sensitive to air pollution, which can trigger asthma attacks and worsen asthma symptoms. Two types of pollutants tend to be the worst in Middle Tennessee, ozone and particulate matter (PM^{2.5}). Ozone is the biggest problem in the summer months, but PM^{2.5} can be high any time of the year.

Health Effects

Ozone

Breathing air with high levels of ground-level ozone can cause serious respiratory problems including:

- coughing
- throat irritation
- chest discomfort
- reduced lung function
- increased asthma attacks
- Inflammation and damage to the lining of your lungs

Particulate Matter (PM^{2.5})

Many scientific studies have linked breathing PM^{2.5} to a series of significant health problems, including:

- aggravated asthma
- increases in respiratory symptoms like coughing and difficult or painful breathing
- chronic bronchitis
- decreased lung function
- premature death

What Causes Air Pollution?

Air pollution created by vehicles contributes up to half of Middle Tennessee's air quality issues. Many individuals making small changes in driving habits can have a big impact. For example, sharing a ride to work cuts car emissions by almost half, and it reduces congestion. Taking mass transit, carpooling, vanpooling, biking, or walking to work even once a week significantly reduces traffic congestion, pollution and saves the typical commuter about 1,200 miles on their vehicle and more than \$600 in total driving costs. In Davidson County in 2001, over 80% of ozone-producing nitrogen oxide emissions came from mobile sources like cars, trucks, boats, and lawnmowers. Almost 50% of volatile organic compounds, which combine with nitrogen oxides to form ozone, came from these same sources.

What has CAP done lately?

Every ozone season, the Clean Air Partnership works with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Air Quality Control Division to issue Air Quality Alerts. Air alerts are issued on days when the air quality forecast predicts that the air quality may be unhealthy for sensitive groups as determined by the EPA's air quality index. Air alerts are sent via EnviroFlash e-mails to the general public and to employers before the end of the work day; through drive-time radio weather and traffic reports; on freeway variable message boards; by TV news and weather programs; and in morning print news media.

In January 2007, CAP launched a public information campaign which includes a redesigned web site, radio and billboard advertising to educate the general public about their contributions to Middle Tennessee's air quality, and encourage activities such as ridesharing, trip chaining, car maintenance, and conserving energy.

Every year the Clean Air Partnership participates in community events including the Nashville Earth Day Festival to raise awareness regarding air quality issues.

We work with Middle Tennessee employers not only to distribute the air alerts to their employees, but also to develop programs for their employees and to reduce their own contributions to air pollution.