

# Air Quality

## FACTS:

- The air we breathe is being polluted by activities such as driving cars and trucks; burning coal, oil, and other fossil fuels; and manufacturing chemicals. Air pollution can even come from smaller, everyday activities such as dry cleaning, filling your car with gas, and degreasing and painting operations.
- Air pollution has been linked to several health effects such as asthma and allergies. The level of risk depends on several factors such as the amount of pollution in the air, the amount of air we breathe in a given time and our overall health.
- Michigan's air quality usually falls in the "good" or "moderate" air quality range. Sometimes, The Air Quality Index (AQI) will reach the orange "unhealthy for sensitive groups" level. Michigan hardly ever experiences air quality concentrations in the "unhealthy" range. The AQI here has never reached hazardous levels.

## Pollution Prevention Month

### RESOURCES:

#### Washtenaw County Public Health

<http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>

#### Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

1-800-292-4706 (within Michigan)

[www.michigan.gov/deq](http://www.michigan.gov/deq)

#### Michigan's Air Quality Index (MDEQ)

<http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3310---,00.html>

#### AIRNow

<http://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.main>

#### American Lung Association – Air Quality

<http://www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=44646#airquality>

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Air Quality

<http://www.cdc.gov/health/airquality.html>

#### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Indoor Air Quality

<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/>



## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

### WHAT'S IN THE AIR?

**OZONE:** A colorless, pungent gas, ground-level ozone is formed by a reaction of sunlight and gaseous chemicals. These chemicals are emitted from automobile exhausts, painting operations, solvent usage, gasoline and power plants.

**PARTICULATES:** Small particles of solid or liquid matter suspended in the air or in an emission. Particles may be smoke, spray, dust and fumes. Sources include various industrial and manufacturing operations, power plants automobiles and diesel engines, wood burning and leaf burning. Particulate emissions from Michigan's stationary sources (industrial and manufacturing operations, power plants) have declined by more than 85% since 1974.

**NITROGEN DIOXIDE:** A yellow-brown gas emitted into the air during combustion of all types of fuels. Sources include automobiles, power plants and certain chemical manufacturing operations. Nitrogen dioxide emissions from power plants have been reduced by 85%.

**SULFUR DIOXIDE:** A heavy, pungent, colorless gas formed when coal, fuel oil, or any fuel containing sulfur is burned. Fuel burning plants, certain chemical plants, metal processing, and trash burning are its major sources. A 65% reduction in sulfur dioxide emissions from Michigan's stationary sources has been realized since 1974.

**CARBON MONOXIDE:** A colorless, odorless, poisonous gas produced by incomplete combustion of substances containing carbon. The main source is automobile exhaust.

**LEAD:** A metallic element that may be released in the form of tiny particles from smelters and automobile exhausts. Michigan residents now use unleaded fuel, so it's not a problem.

**TOXICS:** Other compounds found in the air... such as dioxins and furans emitted from incinerators; metals from plating facilities and organic gases from chemical processes, painting operations and even woodstoves.

### MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE IN HELPING REDUCE AIR POLLUTION:

- Conserve energy and choose to use energy efficient products.
- Use public transportation, form a car pool, bike or walk.
- Keep your car properly maintained; it improves air quality (and saves you money).
- Compost or mulch autumn leaves instead of burning them.
- Reuse and Recycle whatever you can.
- Support environmentally friendly businesses and industries.
- Report air pollution problems.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE:

For more information on indoor air quality visit  
<http://environmentalhealth.ewashtenaw.org>  
or call 734-222-3800.