



Maricopa County
Air Quality Department



Valley Experiences Fewer Ozone Health Warnings in 2009

PHOENIX (Sept. 30, 2009) -- Valley residents breathed a little easier this summer as ozone pollution caused fewer public health warnings than during the same period in 2008. Lower temperatures in June, introduction of the light rail, and increased use of other public transportation are believed to have helped generate the good result.

“The year 2009 was better for clean air and public health than last year but it was still unacceptable. The good news is we can accelerate the pace of environmental progress if we continue to increase opportunities for smart transportation and pollution reduction,” said ADEQ Director Benjamin H. Grumbles.

Ozone pollution – which pervades the air each April through September – caused 31 health watches and six High Pollution Advisories (HPAs) this year. That’s better than in 2008, when the Valley experienced 44 ozone health watches and 11 ozone HPAs.

“The numbers show improvement but we need to continue efforts to reduce pollution,” said Maricopa County Air Quality Department Director Lawrence Odle. “It’s important to practice clean air behavior throughout our daily routines.”

Ground level ozone pollution can irritate lungs and airways, damage plants and crops, and tarnish paint and other items outdoors. Valley air is monitored daily by the Air Quality Division of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

“Our studies show that residents are choosing to carpool or vanpool more often each week,” said David A. Boggs, executive director of Valley Metro. “When you drive 45 miles you create about one pound of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). That’s why it’s important to consider alternatives to the single occupant trip.”

To track how much pollution your commute generates, visit www.ValleyMetro.org and select ShareTheRide. To receive air quality updates during the winter months, visit www.CleanAirMakeMore.com.

2009 Ozone Health Watches:

April 20, 23, 30	July 1, 3-4, 10, 18, 21, 23-24
May 4-5, 8, 13, 15-18, 27-28	August 1-3, 5, 28
June 23, 29-30	September 1-2

2009 Ozone High Pollution Advisories:

April 21	June 24
May 1, 6-7	July 17

8-Hour Exceedance Days:

April 30	June 22
May 17	July 2

OZONE BACKGROUND: Ground level ozone is formed by a chemical reaction that needs heat from sunlight, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds [VOCs] to form. The months of April through September make up our Valley’s longer-than-normal “ozone season.”

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WHO'S WHO?

The **Arizona Department of Environmental Quality [ADEQ]** provides a daily forecast for air quality. When conditions exist, ADEQ will issue high pollution advisories, health watches and alerts. Daily air quality forecasts are on ADEQ's Web site at www.azdeq.gov/enviro/air/ozone/ensemble.pdf or by calling (602)771-2367. Those interested in receiving the air quality forecast via email can subscribe to ADEQ's forecast list at www.azdeq.gov/subscribe.html and text alerts at www.azdeq.gov/sms.html

The **Maricopa County Air Quality Department** issues No Burn Day restrictions based on a high pollution advisory or health watch. These No Burn Day restrictions typically occur during the winter months. To find out if any burn restrictions are in place, call 602-506-6400 or visit www.cleanairmakemore.com. Information is given in both English and Spanish.

To learn more about the Maricopa County residential woodburning restriction ordinance, view a copy on our website www.maricopa.gov/raq. Click on the direct link to the residential woodburning restriction ordinance: http://www.maricopa.gov/raq/divisions/planning_analysis/rules/docs/rwro9911.pdf

Valley Metro/RPTA provides eco-friendly public transit options to residents of greater Phoenix and Maricopa County, including a clean-fuel bus fleet, low-emissions light rail, online carpool matching and bus trip mapping, and bicycle and telework assistance. Funding is provided by local, state and federal revenues and administered by a board of 15 governments working to improve and regionalize the public transit system. www.ValleyMetro.org

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