



# OzoneAware

LET'S TAKE CARE OF OUR SUMMER AIR

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **Warm Weather Brings Ground-Level Ozone Pollution to Denver Metro/North Front Range Region**

*OzoneAware program issues alerts to inform area residents of poor air quality,  
encourages voluntary action to reduce harmful emissions*

**DENVER — June 2, 2014** — June brings warmer weather to the Denver Metro/Northern Front Range area and with warmer weather comes ground-level ozone pollution season. Ozone season is a period in which concentrations of ground-level ozone -- an air pollutant resulting from a chemical reaction between emissions factors and heat and sunlight – are most likely to reach a level that may be unhealthy for some people to breathe. The season will last through the hot summer months into late August/early September.

During ozone season, the Regional Air Quality Council's (RAQC) OzoneAware program issues Ozone Action Alerts to inform metro residents when meteorologists from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) expect weather conditions to lead to potentially unhealthy ozone concentrations. The program also encourages people to understand how air quality affects their health and the health of their family members and to take action to reduce their individual ozone-causing emissions.

“It is important that area residents are aware of heightened ozone levels and the effect that ozone pollution may have on their health and the health of their loved ones,” said Ken Lloyd, executive director of the RAQC. “You can’t see ozone, but it is a harmful air pollutant that affects all of us – especially children, older adults and people with pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma. It’s also a pollutant that we can all help to reduce by making some small changes in our daily activities.”

Ground-level ozone pollution can cause breathing difficulties, eye irritation and reduced resistance to lung infections and colds. It forms when emissions from gas-powered vehicles and lawn equipment, industrial processes, and even household paints and solvents react with heat and sunlight. The highest ozone levels usually occur in summer months when temperatures approach the high 80s and 90s and the wind is stagnant or light. Last year, OzoneAware issued 32 high ozone alerts from June 1 through Aug. 31.

Ozone is the Denver Metro/North Front Range region's most significant air quality issue. The region fell out of compliance with the federal standard for ozone pollution in 2007 and 2008, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recently given the Denver Metro Area/North Front Range region until 2015 to meet the 2008 federal standard. Local residents, as well as businesses and industry, can help by making voluntary changes in their behavior to reduce ozone, improve air quality and bring the area back into compliance.

Here are some of the actions Denver Metro/Northern Front Range residents can take to reduce ground-level ozone:

- Drive less – walk or ride a bike, group errands, take public transit and carpool when possible.
- Mow in the evening after 5 p.m.
- Refuel in the evening after 5 p.m.
- “Stop at the click” – do not overfill gas tanks when refueling.
- Keep vehicles regularly maintained.
- Tighten gas caps after refueling.
- Use electric lawn equipment.
- Avoid solvent-based products; use water-based paint, stain and sealants.
- Make a smart vehicle choice – choose hybrid, electric or more fuel-efficient vehicles when purchasing or renting a car.
- Avoid idling and drive-through lines – turn off the engine and go inside.
- Sign up for Ozone Action Alerts.
- Take the Clean Air Community Pledge.

Area residents can sign up to receive Ozone Action Alerts via e-mail at [www.OzoneAware.org](http://www.OzoneAware.org). Additionally, they can visit the site to join OzoneAware's Clean Air Community, commit to take action, and use OzoneAware's online/mobile calculation tool – the OzoMeter – to track their activities and calculate their air quality impact. OzoneAware is also on social media sites – Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest -- at /OzoneAware.

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#### **About Regional Air Quality Council**

The Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) is the lead air quality planning agency for the seven-county Denver metropolitan area. The Council's main purpose is to develop plans and programs to keep the region in compliance with federal air quality standards, with significant input from area citizens, business, and local governments. The RAQC also oversees the development and implementation of air quality outreach and education programs throughout the region.