

April 2008

## 2008 Revised National Ozone Standard

On March 12, 2008, U.S. EPA finalized a new national outdoor air quality standard for ground-level ozone, a component of smog. The new standard is the most stringent standard ever set for ozone at 75 parts per billion. This fact sheet explains the new standard, its relationship to the existing ozone standard and what Ohio EPA is doing to comply.

### What is ozone?

Ground-level ozone is not emitted directly into the air, but forms when emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) "cook" in the sun. Power plants, motor vehicle exhaust, industrial facilities, gasoline vapors and chemical solvents are the major human-made sources of these emissions.

### Why is ozone a problem?

Ozone can harm people's lungs, and U.S. EPA is particularly concerned about individuals with asthma or other lung diseases, as well as those who spend a lot of time outside, such as children. Ozone exposure can aggravate asthma, resulting in increased medication use and emergency room visits, and it can increase susceptibility to respiratory infections.

### Is Ohio's air dirtier?

No! Air quality in Ohio has consistently improved over the past 30 years. What keeps changing is the standard by which U.S. EPA defines "clean."

Compare it to a grading scale change at school. If a child consistently scored 90-94 percent on tests, she would be an A student under a grading scale that is based on 90 percent for an A. But if the grading scale started requiring 95 percent for an A, the child - with the same performance -- would suddenly be a B student. That is similar to what is happening with the grading scale for clean air.

### Why did U.S. EPA change the ozone standard?

The federal Clean Air Act requires U.S. EPA to evaluate each national air quality standard every five years to ensure that it is protective of public health and the environment.

Before new standards are established, scientific analysis and recommendations undergo rigorous review by the scientific community, industry, public interest groups, the general public and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC).

This time, U.S. EPA selected the levels for the final standards after reviewing more than 1,700 peer-reviewed scientific studies about the effects of ozone on public health and welfare, and after considering advice from the Agency's external scientific advisors and staff, along with public comment. U.S. EPA held five public hearings and received nearly 90,000 written comments.

U.S. EPA estimates that the final standards will yield health benefits valued between \$2 billion and \$19 billion.

Those benefits include preventing cases of bronchitis, aggravated asthma, hospital and emergency room visits, nonfatal heart attacks and premature death, among others.

U.S. EPA's Regulatory Impact analysis shows that benefits are likely greater than the cost of implementing the standards. Cost estimates range from \$7.6 billion to \$8.5 billion. However, the Clean Air Act prohibits U.S. EPA from considering costs in setting or revising the national air quality standards.

### How will the new ozone standard impact Ohio?

Ohio EPA estimates that 32 counties will not meet the new standard. The metropolitan areas that will be impacted include: Cleveland-Akron, Youngstown, Canton, Toledo, Lima, Steubenville, Marietta, Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati.

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## How soon does Ohio have to meet the new standard?

Ohio has until 2009 to give U.S. EPA a list of counties that do not meet this new standard. U.S. EPA plans to designate non-attainment areas (the counties that do not meet the standard) in 2010. States will then have three years to develop plans to meet this standard, and have between 2013 to 2020 to bring nonattainment areas into compliance.

## What happens to the existing eight-hour ozone standard?

Ohio must still achieve compliance with the existing eight-hour standard of 84 parts per billion in 19 counties in three metropolitan areas: Cleveland-Akron, Columbus and Cincinnati.

In the Cleveland-Akron area, the following counties have until June 2010 to meet the existing ozone standard: Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage and Summit.

The following counties in the Columbus and Cincinnati areas have until June 2009 to meet the standard: Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Knox, Licking, Madison, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton and Warren.

Once Ohio fully complies with the existing standard, it will need to comply with the new standard.

## What is Ohio doing to comply with the existing ozone standard?

In 2007, Ohio EPA adopted three rules to help meet the existing ozone standard. These rules require the use of cleaner paints and architectural coatings, better sealed portable gas cans and cleaner consumer products.

Ohio is already implementing federal air pollution control rules, such as the Clean Air Interstate Rule, that will improve air quality and help us move toward meeting the standard. It is too soon to know what additional air pollution controls will be needed.

In Northeast Ohio, the E-Check vehicle emissions testing program will need to continue to address emissions from automobiles as required by U.S. EPA.

In the Cincinnati area, the Clean Air Act and federal regulations allowed Ohio to replace E-Check with a cleaner gasoline and controls on auto body paint shops and solvents used at companies with degreasing operations.

With these emission reductions, Ohio EPA projects, based on air quality modeling, that all areas of the state will comply with the existing standard by the federal deadlines. However, Ohio EPA's air monitoring for ozone still must demonstrate that each area complies with the existing standard by the applicable attainment deadline.

## Will Ohio appeal the new ozone standard?

No. Ohio recognizes the concern regarding the potential costs associated with complying with the new air quality standard; however, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that U.S. EPA cannot consider costs when setting air quality standards.

Ohio will carefully review U.S. EPA's implementation rules when released and will consider whether or not challenges to this plan are appropriate. Ohio will continue to strive to create a balance between environmental protection and economic development.

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### Implementation Timeline

<b>2009</b>	States submit recommendations for county designations to U.S. EPA.
<b>2010</b>	U.S. EPA designates nonattainment areas.
<b>2013</b>	States submit state implementation plans to U.S. EPA.
<b>2013-2030</b>	States have up to 20 years to comply with the standard. Areas with dirtier air have longer to comply than those with lower pollution levels.