Air Quality Programs

Mission Statement

The mission of the Air Quality Division is to provide and enhance public health, welfare and the environment by controlling present and future sources of air pollution.

Our core responsibilities include:

- Forecasting and publicizing daily air quality information
- Monitoring and analyzing air quality data
- Developing plans to attain and maintain public health National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)
- Issuing construction and operating permits that ensure air pollution control
- Providing compliance assistance, investigating complaints and ensuring compliance
- Inspecting vehicles to ensure efficient operation that minimizes pollution
- Protecting the public from exposure to asbestos-containing material
- Protecting visibility in both urban and national parks and wilderness area vistas

Contacts for Further Information

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AIR QUALITY DIVISION

Air Quality

Forecasting Air Quality

Air quality meteorologists issue forecasts for Maricopa County, Sunday-Friday, that include air quality public health information statements. Health Watches are issued when pollution levels approaching a health standard for ozone or coarse (PM10) or fine (PM2.5) particulate matter are expected. High Pollution Advisories are issued when unhealthy levels of pollution for these pollutants are expected. The forecast can be heard on the ADEQ hotline at (602) 771-2367 or toll-free at (800) 234-5677.

ADEQ issues a Health Watch when pollution levels have reached a point at which people with respiratory or other health problems that make them more sensitive to air pollution need to be advised and limit their outdoor activity.

A High Pollution Advisory is issued when pollution levels are reaching unhealthy levels for everyone, not just people with respiratory problems. High Pollution Advisories encourage people to limit outdoor activity, and reduce driving and other activities that cause air pollution.

Monitoring Network

Air quality monitoring networks operate in urban and rural areas throughout Arizona so citizens can know local air quality conditions and to help ADEQ and local air quality control districts identify the causes of air pollution. The networks are composed of individual monitoring sites that collect ambient air quality data in a variety of representative settings. The data determine whether public health standards are met and allow scientists to assess the effects of pollution on public health and welfare. The networks also monitor the nature and causes of visibility impairment.

Air Quality Plans

The State Implementation Plan (SIP) is the cumulative record of all air pollution strategies, state statutes, state rules and local ordinances implemented under Title I Clean Air Act within Arizona. Revisions to Arizona's SIP must be submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by the director of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality on behalf of the Governor. Arizona currently has 14 air quality planning areas, each with specific plans related to the larger SIP. These plans are posted on our Web site.

Permits

The Air Quality Division issues air quality permits to industries and facilities that emit regulated pollutants to ensure that these emissions do not harm public health or cause significant deterioration in areas that presently have clean air. Our Web site has specific information on permits.

Compliance Assistance and Assurance

The program assists regulated entities in understanding complex air quality requirements. The Compliance Section conducts inspections and follow-up compliance activities at facilities that generate air pollution. Community liaisons also assist citizens with complaints about air quality throughout the state.

Vehicle Emissions Inspection

Increasing vehicle use in metropolitan Phoenix and Tucson contributes to air pollution that endangers public health. To improve air quality and reduce vehicle emissions in these heavily traveled areas, the Air Quality Division administers a mandatory vehicle emissions testing and repair program known as Car Care.

Car Care emphasizes the importance of maintaining vehicle performance to lower emissions and extending the life of one of your most valuable assets - your vehicle.

Car Care uses new testing technology and customer service measures that increase the effectiveness of emissions testing and shorten the time customers spend in the emissions process. The results are cleaner air, faster testing procedures and better customer service.

Community Involvement and Outreach

The Air Quality Division is committed to involving citizens in developing plans to maintain good air quality throughout the state.

Community involvement efforts include two-way communication designed to keep citizens informed and give them the opportunity to express concerns, identify issues and assist the Air Quality Division in determining the most cost-effective control measures for improved air quality. Stakeholder meetings as well as plan and rule hearings are always open to the public.

The Air Quality Division also has staff available to visit schools and environmental events as a way to provide community outreach. Air Quality related outreach materials and links are available on the ADEQ Web page as well.

Emergency Response

The Hazardous Air Response team is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond to air quality related emergencies such as heavy smoke from fires or toxic releases that threaten air quality. The team responds to emergencies throughout the state and along the Mexican border.