



Springfield-Greene County
Health Department
Helping people live longer, healthier, happier lives

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From the Office of the Director of Health

Change in Air Quality Standard Requires Action in Springfield

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department learned late Wednesday that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has lowered the ground-level ozone standard to 75 ppb (or parts per billion). This means the Springfield region including the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes five counties, exceeds the new standards.

“We are not surprised by the lower standard,” says air quality control program coordinator Doug Neidigh. “We knew the change was coming. We just didn’t know to what extent.”

Neidigh and representatives from more than 30 other agencies in a 10-county coverage area recently formed the Ozarks Clean Air Alliance (OCAA) to address the upcoming standard change and discuss proactive steps that could be taken in advance of the announcement.

“Air quality impacts all of us,” adds Neidigh. “We need to work hard to make changes in the many communities in our region. OCAA is currently working with businesses, local governments and community organizations to implement voluntary strategies to reduce emissions, but we need the public’s help, as well, to ensure people who live in these communities will have clean air to breathe for years to come.”

OCAA encourages organizations to adopt practices that will reduce emissions. They also encourage residents within the Springfield MSA to make small changes that will have a dramatic impact on reducing ground-level ozone and improving air quality. Some examples include:

- Mow lawns in the evening, rather than during midday
- Carpool, use public transit, walk or bicycle
- Trip chain (combine errands into one trip to reduce drive time)
- Use an electric lawnmower
- Avoid letting cars idle for extended periods
- Properly maintain vehicles to help improve gas mileage and reduce emissions

Public education campaigns on additional ways to reduce ground-level ozone will be launched in the coming months. More information can be found on the health department’s Web site at <http://health.springfieldmogov.org> or the EPA Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/groundlevelozone/actions.html>.

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