

Department of Energy & Environmental Protection Forecasts Unhealthy Air Quality for most of Connecticut on Thursday May 30 through Saturday June 1

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is forecasting unhealthy air quality for “sensitive groups” on Thursday, May 30 through Saturday, June 1, due to predicted elevated concentrations of ground-level ozone pollution. Southern sections of Middlesex and New London counties will experience unhealthy air quality for “sensitive groups on Thursday May 30th”. This area of unhealthy air quality for “sensitive groups” is expected to expand to include Fairfield, New Haven, Hartford and Tolland counties on Friday May 31st and Saturday June 1st..

A forecast of “Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups” indicates increased likelihood of respiratory symptoms and breathing discomfort in active children and adults with respiratory disease, such as asthma.

“Elevated levels of ozone in the air we breathe impact the health of everyone, but sensitive people, including children, the elderly and those with respiratory disease are at greater risk,” said DEEP Commissioner Daniel C. Esty. “Over the next few days, I urge everyone to take appropriate precautions and consider limiting outdoor exertion during the warmest part of the day.”

Ground level or "bad" ozone is created when two types of air pollutants, nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOC), react in the presence of sunlight and warm temperatures. These air pollutants are generated both inside and outside of Connecticut from industrial facilities and electric utilities, motor vehicle exhaust, and gasoline vapors. Air pollution is also transported into Connecticut on prevailing westerly winds from the Ohio River Valley and from the southwest along the I-95 urban corridor from Washington D.C.

Weather Summary:

High pressure centered over Bermuda will allow for a combination of hazy sunshine, hot temperatures and southwest surface winds to persist over Connecticut Thursday through Sunday.

Health Effects:

Unhealthy concentrations of ground level ozone can cause or make worse a variety of respiratory and other health problems including breathing difficulty, coughing and throat irritation. Breathing ozone can affect lung function and worsen asthma episodes. Anyone can be affected by ozone and particularly sensitive groups include children and adults who are active outdoors, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma. Sensitive people who experience effects at lower ozone concentrations are likely to experience more serious effects at higher

concentrations. Especially sensitive individuals should consider remaining in an air conditioned environment.

What You Can Do to Help:

Connecticut experienced 27 unhealthy air quality days during 2012. When air pollution levels are predicted to be “unhealthy for sensitive groups” DEEP recommends:

- Conserving electricity by setting air conditioners to 78°;
- “[Wait ‘til 8](#)” to use energy intensive appliances like washing machines, dryers and dishwashers;
- Driving less by carpooling, vanpooling or using public transit;
- Telecommuting if possible;
- Refueling your vehicle after dusk and never idling a vehicle unnecessarily;

Additional Resources

DEEP monitors, tracks and forecasts daily air quality levels across Connecticut for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) each day of the year, and for ozone from May 1 through September 30 each year. On April 30, 2013, DEEP began informing Connecticut’s regulated community and the general public of the upcoming ozone season via the State of Connecticut E-mail list serve and posting [air quality forecasts](#). There are numerous ways to access the daily AQI forecast and real-time air quality data:

- Click on the [Air Quality Index](#) hyperlink on DEEP’s web page to obtain the current forecasted and real-time air quality levels for ground level ozone and PM_{2.5}.
- Go to EPA’s [AIRNow](#) web page.
- A [Twitter](#) link is available to follow daily air quality forecasts and alerts that are generated by EPA’s EnviroFlash system, providing the latest air quality information and alerts by e-mail.
- To receive daily AQI e-mail alerts, click the EnviroFlash link <http://www.enviroflash.info/>, allowing you the option to subscribe for a daily AQI e-mail forecast.
- Finally, the AQI forecast is available by calling DEEP’s air quality hot-lines at 800.249.1234.

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