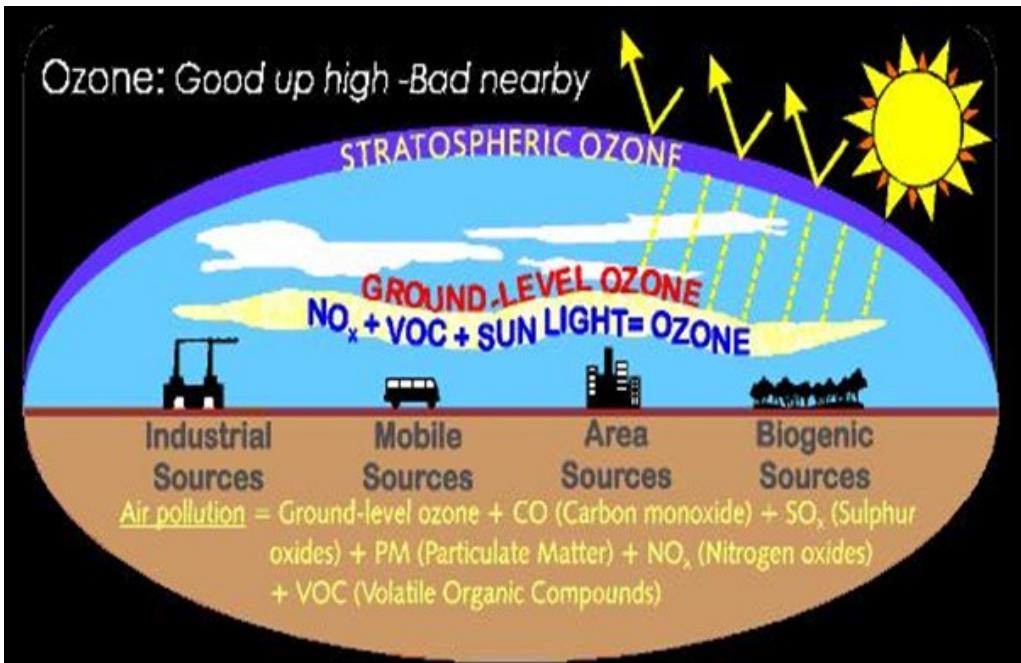


Ozone Daily Forecasts Begin April 1

MDEQ issues daily ozone forecasts from April 1 to October 31 for DeSoto County, the Jackson Metro area, and the Gulf Coast. These forecasts keep residents and industries apprised of the current ozone conditions and alert them if an Air Quality Action Day is forecast. These forecasts are updated and available daily via the [MDEQ website](#), [MDEQ Twitter](#) account, and [daily emails](#).

Air Quality Action Days are those days when ozone levels are forecast to exceed the standard, and for those days residents and industries can alter behavior to reduce air pollution. For individuals that includes carpooling, reducing idling, and postponing vehicle refueling and lawn maintenance until after 6:00 p.m. On these days sensitive groups, such as children and adults with asthma or lung disease, should reduce exposure by reducing pro-



longed or heavy exertion outdoors. Ground level ozone is not emitted directly into the air, but it is created by chemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). This happens when pollutants emitted by cars, power plants, industrial boilers, refineries, chemical plants and other sources chemically react in the presence of sunlight. Ozone at ground level is the main ingredient in "smog." Under the Clean Air Act, EPA establishes primary air quality standards to protect public health and secondary standards to protect public welfare that includes protecting ecosystems, plants and animals. Currently, Mississippi is meeting all of these standards, or is "in attainment," for the current ozone standard which is 70 parts per billion (ppb). In October 2015, EPA lowered the ozone standard from 75 ppb to 70 ppb.

Although Mississippi is meeting this standard, it is crucial that all areas of the state, especially DeSoto County and the Mississippi Gulf Coast, work cooperatively to maintain low ozone levels because four relatively high ozone days in a year could cause EPA to issue a "nonattainment" designation to a violating area. Any area designated as nonattainment faces potential economic development constraints, including limits to industrial growth and transportation improvement, such as restrictions on highway expansion and development.

Developing plans cooperatively to meet air quality standards is the focus for each of the Mississippi Air Quality Action Groups. The groups, initially formed by MDEQ, cities, county agencies, industries, government agencies, and public interest groups, are stakeholder-led efforts to help citizens, businesses, and industries become aware of the issue and how they can be part of the solution.

The groups are developing outreach materials and planning promotional events to encourage air pollution reduction steps and more efficient ways to notify residents and businesses about Air Quality Action Days.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Air Quality Action Group and the DeSoto County Air Quality Action Group are recruiting new members. For more information, please contact Keith Head at KHead@mdeq.ms.gov or (601) 961-5577.

For more information on the Air Quality Index or to join the forecasting email list, contact Rodney Cuevas at RCuevas@mdeq.ms.gov or (601) 961-5566.

Good 0-50	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate 51-100	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups 101-150	Members of sensitive groups* may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
Unhealthy 151-200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy 201-300	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.
Hazardous 301-500	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more than likely to be affected.