

AIR # 16

<http://www.epa.gov/air/particles/>

Last updated on Wednesday, November 22nd, 2006.

Particulate Matter



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"Particulate matter," also known as particle pollution or PM, is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. Particle pollution is made up of a number of components, including acids (such as nitrates and sulfates), organic chemicals, metals, and soil or dust particles.

The size of particles is directly linked to their potential for causing health problems. EPA is concerned about particles that are 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller because those are the particles that generally pass through the throat and nose and enter the lungs. Once inhaled, these particles can affect the heart and lungs and cause serious health effects. EPA groups particle pollution into two categories:

- "Inhalable coarse particles," such as those found near roadways and dusty industries, are larger than 2.5 micrometers and smaller than 10 micrometers in diameter.
- "Fine particles," such as those found in smoke and haze, are 2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller. These particles can be directly emitted from sources such as forest fires, or they can form when gases emitted from power plants, industries and automobiles react in the air.

[Basic Information](#) - Basics about particle pollution.

[Health and Welfare](#) - Effects of particle pollution.

[PM Standards](#) - Links to technical information related to setting the national air quality standards for particle pollution.

[PM Designations](#) - Regional, state and local information related to PM nonattainment.

[PM Implementation](#) - Programs and requirements for reducing particle pollution.

[Regulatory Actions](#) - Links to proposed and final rules, fact sheets, and other rulemaking documents.

[PM Research](#) - Links to PM research and development, monitoring, and daily reporting and forecasting.

[Air Quality Trends](#) - Progress made in reducing particle

Announcements

October 6, 2006 - EPA has completed its benefits and cost analysis of the recently strengthened standards for particle pollution.

[Read More](#)

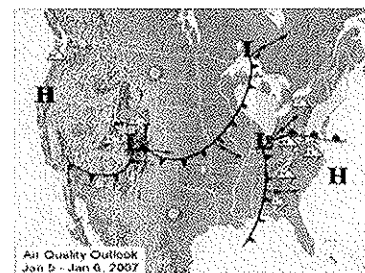
September 28, 2006 - EPA has finalized amendments to its national air quality monitoring requirements, including those for monitoring particle pollution.

[Read More](#)

September 21, 2006 - EPA strengthens National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particle Pollution.

- * [Learn more about today's action](#)
- * [Final Rule](#)
- * [Fact Sheet \(PDF, 8 pp, 63 KB\)](#)

Your Air Quality



Good	Moderate	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
Unhealthy	Very Unhealthy	Hazardous
No data available		

The AIRNow Web site offers daily air quality forecasts for ozone pollution as well as real-time air quality conditions for over 300 cities across the U.S.

pollution.

Publications - Publications related to particle pollution.

Related Links - Other information related to particle pollution.