

News Releases

DHEC News Release: Ground-level ozone forecast season underway

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2012

Ground-level ozone forecast season underway

COLUMBIA, S.C. - The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control has begun issuing daily forecasts for ground-level ozone, the agency announced today.

"During the warmer months, ground-level ozone is our state's most widespread air quality concern," said Myra C. Reece, chief of DHEC's Bureau of Air Quality. "High ground-level ozone concentrations generally occur on hot sunny days when the air is stagnant."

Reece said ground-level ozone can create breathing problems, especially for children, people with asthma or other respiratory problems, and adults who work or exercise outdoors. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, ground-level ozone can also cause **tree and crop damage** <<http://www.epa.gov/glo/health.html>>.

"We provide our forecasts to help the public make healthy decisions about outdoor activities," Reece said. "When ground-level ozone levels are forecast to reach unhealthy levels, we declare an ozone action day. When these are declared, we encourage everyone to reduce their activity level outdoors. We also suggest that those with respiratory conditions, such as asthma, should stay indoors or limit outdoor activities as much as possible."

Ground-level ozone forecasts are available from:

DHEC's website: <http://www.scdhec.gov/ozone> <<http://www.scdhec.gov/ozone>>

A toll-free hotline: 1-866-238-4973

The EPA's EnviroFlash webpage: <http://www.enviroflash.info> <<http://www.enviroflash.info>>.

For more information about ground-level ozone, including DHEC's "Take a Break from the Exhaust" program to encourage the use of alternative commuting options, go to: <http://www.scdhec.gov/YouHoldtheKeySC> <<http://www.scdhec.gov/youholdthekeysc>>.

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