

# U.S. EPA finalizes ozone pollution rule

November 9 2005

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Wednesday it has published rules to guide local governments in reducing ozone pollution.

EPA Acting Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation Bill Wehrum said the reduction of ozone pollution is an important element of the EPA's national clean air strategy that includes reducing ozone pollution from diesel engines and power plants.

A recent EPA analysis of the benefits of meeting the eight-hour ozone standard -- setting 0.08 parts per million as an average ozone emission level during an eight-hour period -- would annually prevent hundreds of premature deaths, thousands of hospital admissions, hundreds of asthma emergency room visits, more than 1 million restricted activity days, and more than 900,000 school absences.

Ozone, a primary ingredient in smog, is formed when organic compounds and nitrogen oxides react chemically in sunlight, is unhealthy to breathe, especially for people with respiratory diseases and for anyone who is active outdoors.

The new rule requires local governments to demonstrate through modeling that non-attainment areas will attain the eight-hour standards as expeditiously as possible.

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Citation: U.S. EPA finalizes ozone pollution rule (2005, November 9) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-11-epa-ozone-pollution.html>

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