

# Beijing launches action plan to fight pollution

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Pedestrians cross a dusty street in Beijing on December 16, 2010. People in China are increasingly dissatisfied with their lives as confidence in Beijing's ability to govern the vast country and manage the economy falters, according to a key government think tank. AFP PHOTO/LIU JIN

Beijing -- one of the world's most polluted cities -- launched a five-year action plan on Tuesday that aims to improve the environment by phasing out coal-fired boilers and reducing bad air days.

The Chinese capital's environmental protection bureau said that it wanted excellent or good air conditions for 80 percent of the days in the year by 2015.

The bureau added it aimed to reduce by around 10 percent the concentration of [particulate matter](#) in the air compared with 2010.

Highly polluting coal-fired boilers and stoves in six Beijing districts will be refurbished with equipment that uses [clean energy](#), Zhuang Zhidong, deputy head of the bureau, was quoted as saying by the state Xinhua news agency.

He added that three of the four thermal power plants in the capital will undergo clean energy renovations.

Beijing authorities will also try to phase out 400,000 old, polluting vehicles before the end of 2015 and gradually adopt restrictive measures for other high emission cars, the statement said.

[Air pollution](#) in Beijing has been consistently listed as among the worst in the world by international organisations such as the United Nations, due to the huge number of vehicles on the roads and growing [energy consumption](#).

The number of registered cars in Beijing stood at 4.8 million at the end of 2010, as an average of more than 2,000 new cars hit the capital's streets every day last year, officials said.

To try to ease the problem, authorities have issued new rules stipulating that only 240,000 new cars will be allowed to be registered in Beijing this year, compared to the record 800,000 last year.

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