

Air Quality Fact Sheet

What pollutants are in the North Front Range?

Clean air is important for our health, the environment, and the economy. In the North Front Range, the primary type of pollution is ground-level ozone.

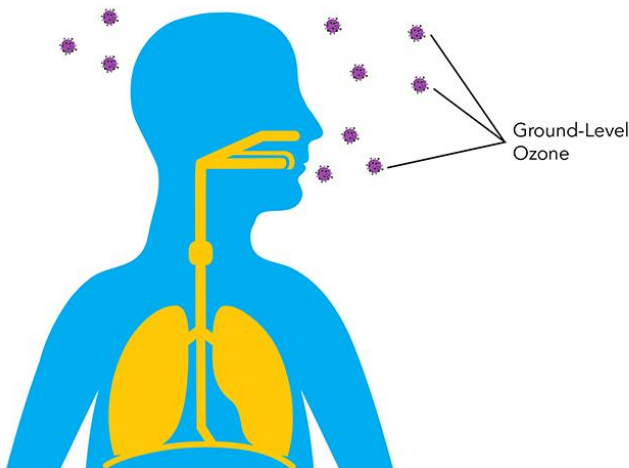
Previously, there were high levels of carbon monoxide (CO) in portions of the region, but CO levels have not exceeded federal standards since 1991.

What is ground-level ozone?

At ground-level, ozone is created when certain chemicals react on warm, sunny days. Major sources of the chemicals include industrial facilities, motor vehicle exhaust, gasoline vapors, and chemical solvents.

Ground-level ozone is harmful, particularly for sensitive people such as the elderly, young children, and people with asthma or other respiratory illnesses. Breathing ozone can cause chest pain, coughing, throat irritation, and airway inflammation.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets standards to protect public health and the environment for six common pollutants. The Denver Metro / North Front Range area has been designated by the EPA as nonattainment for ground-level ozone since 2007.



IF YOU ARE ACTIVE AND EXERCISE OUTDOORS... ↓

OZONE CAN CAUSE YOU BREATHING DIFFICULTY AND EYE IRRITATION.

IF YOU ARE YOUNG OR ELDERLY... ↓

OZONE CAN CAUSE REDUCED RESISTANCE TO LUNG INFECTIONS AND COLDS.

IF YOU ARE ASTHMATIC... ↓

OZONE CAN TRIGGER ATTACKS.

IF YOU SUFFER FROM RESPIRATORY ILLNESS... ↓

OZONE CAN CAUSE WORSENERD SYMPTOMS OF COPD (CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE) OR CHRONIC BRONCHITIS

Image Credit: Regional Air Quality Council

What is an Ozone Action Alert?

On days when ozone levels are unhealthy or are expected to become unhealthy in the next 24 hours, an Ozone Action Alert is issued to notify the public. The red alert sign, shown on the right, indicates an Ozone Action Alert is in effect. On Ozone Action Alert days, people sensitive to ozone should minimize time outdoors and everyone should take steps to reduce emissions. You can subscribe to receive alerts via email or text message by visiting simplestepsbetterair.org/signup/.

Ozone Action Alert



How is ozone pollution controlled?

When an air quality standard is not met, the State must develop a plan for how air quality will be improved. The plan includes a variety of strategies to control emissions, such as Motor Vehicle Emission Budgets (MVEBs), which set an upper limit on emissions from motor vehicles.

The North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) must test its long-range plan and short-range transportation program against the budgets, a process known as transportation conformity, to ensure the planned transportation projects will not negatively impact the region's air quality. The NFRMPO's approved Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) have passed these air quality tests.

Many agencies at the local, state, and federal level work together to address ozone pollution in our region.

Transportation conformity ensures that plans, programs, and projects do not:

- » produce new air quality violations
- » worsen existing violations
- » delay timely attainment of air quality standards

What can I do to help improve our region's air quality?

Simple steps can make a big difference in the quality of the air we breathe. To reduce your impact:

- **Combine car trips**
- **Take public transportation**
- **Walk or bike instead of driving**
- **Carpool or vanpool**
- **Use low volatile organic compound (VOC) cleaners and paints**
- **If you need to mow grass on a hot, sunny day, do it after 5 pm**
- **Don't let your car idle for more than 30 seconds**
- **Fill up your gas tank in the evening when it's cool**
- **Stop refueling when the nozzle clicks the first time**



For more tips on improving air quality, visit simplestepsbetterair.org/.

How to Learn More

Find out the current air quality on our home page at nfrmpo.org and learn more about air quality planning at nfrmpo.org/air-quality/.