

# Maine DEP issues Air Quality Alert for the Southwest Coastal Area on Friday

September 4, 2014

AUGUSTA-- Ground-level ozone concentrations will be climbing in Maine on Friday and are expected to reach unhealthy levels according to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Ozone levels are expected to be highest for the Southwest Coastal area where Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups levels of ozone are expected. The remainder of the coastline and the Interior sections can expect no higher than Moderate levels of ozone with levels remaining in the GOOD range for the mountains and northern Maine. Particle pollution levels are expected to remain low.

At high ozone levels, children, healthy adults who exert themselves, and individuals suffering from a respiratory disease such as asthma, bronchitis or COPD can experience reduced lung function and irritation. When this happens, individuals may notice a shortness of breath, coughing, throat irritation, and/or experience an uncomfortable sensation in their chest.

Some actions you can take to protect your health during periods of unhealthy air quality include:

- Adjusting your schedule to avoid strenuous outdoor activity during the afternoon.
- Avoid using aerosol products such as cleaners, paints, and other lung irritants.
- Periods of poor air quality in the summer often happen during abnormally hot and humid weather. Please consult the Maine CDC website for information on the health impacts of extreme heat and appropriate actions to take (<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/heat/>).
- The Maine CDC Asthma Prevention and Control Program has asthma action plan forms and other information available at their web site: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/mat/index.htm>
- For more information on asthma control visit EPA's Web site [www.epa.gov/asthma](http://www.epa.gov/asthma) to find fact sheets, brochures, children's activity books, and educational videos with information about asthma triggers and lessons on asthma management.

There are several ways that Maine's citizens can follow the air quality forecast. In addition to those listed above, sports coaches, elder care workers, nurses and others who are responsible for the welfare of people impacted by poor air quality are urged to use one of the following tools to know when air quality is expected to be poor:

Air Quality Forecast page: [www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/](http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/) which has links to: EnviroFlash, EPA's email and text alert system, [www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/enviroflash.html](http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/enviroflash.html) Twitter, for sign up information go to: [www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/twitter.html](http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/twitter.html) EPA's mobile app is available at: [m.epa.gov/apps/airnow.html](http://m.epa.gov/apps/airnow.html) DEP's toll free air quality hotline is 1-800-223-1196 For more information call the contacts listed above or go to DEP's air quality web site: [www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/](http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/).