

## Give the Earth some *clean* air



June 8, 2005 June 7, 2006

## JOIN US IN CELEBRATING Clean Air Day

### Clean Air Day

Clean Air Day is celebrated by Canadians from coast to coast. It was proclaimed by the Government of Canada to increase public awareness and action on two governmental priorities, clean air and climate change. It is part of Canadian Environment Week, which was created to promote and celebrate activities that care for and nurture our natural environment.

The **Clean Air Day** partners have created a web site that provides resources to help you organize or participate in activities in your community centre, school or in your neighbourhood. Consult the calendar of events at [www.cleanairday.com](http://www.cleanairday.com) to see whether any events are planned near you... or get inspired and organize your own activity!

### Air quality and climate change

Non-renewable energy sources, such as fossil fuels, that we use to power our vehicles, heat and cool our homes and manufacture goods, are a source of air emissions that contribute to air pollution and smog, as well as greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Using energy wisely is one of the best ways to reduce air pollution and the greenhouse gases associated with climate change.

### What is smog?

### What is its impact on health?

Smog is a noxious mixture of gases and particles that often appears as a haze in the air. Although smog is mostly a summer problem, winter smog episodes can also be a serious concern when stagnant conditions cause a build up of pollutants in the air, especially from industrial emissions, vehicle emissions and residential wood burning. To varying degrees, air pollution is linked to a number of health concerns including respiratory diseases (e.g. asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), cardiovascular disease, allergies, and neurological disorders. Current research has shown that even low levels of air pollution can be harmful, and for many forms of air pollution, there is no safe threshold.

Clean Air is a priority of the Government of Canada. To find out more about action taken by the Government of Canada and other governments, and what you can do, or for quick answers to your questions about air quality, visit the **Clean Air Online** Web site at [www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair-airpur](http://www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair-airpur). This site was developed to provide Canadians with information and tools that they can use to reduce air emissions.

### Make that little extra effort at home...

- When buying a new appliance, look for the ENERGY STAR symbol, which identifies energy-efficient appliances. Refrigerators, freezers, stoves, dishwashers, washers and dryers account for 13 percent of annual household energy use.
- Make your home more energy efficient through improved insulation, caulking and weather-stripping. The less energy you use, the less impact you have on the environment.
- Plant deciduous trees around your home. They provide shade in summer and allow the light through in winter.
- Buy an electric stove or fireplace, and if you decide to buy a wood stove, choose one that has been certified for low emissions by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the Canadian Standards Association (CSA B-415.1-00). This will significantly reduce air particulate emissions, which are a major contributor to winter smog.
- Use equipment powered by small, gasoline engines, such as lawn mowers and snow blowers, less often and for shorter periods of time. Maintain equipment in good condition by keeping the blades sharp, for example.
- When buying new equipment, consider a new generation engine with an emissions reduction system.
- Buy locally produced foods and products wherever possible to minimize the impact of freight transportation.
- Compost kitchen scraps and yard waste because organic waste in landfills produces gases that contribute to climate change.
- Recycle, since it takes much less energy to manufacture new products from recycled materials than from raw materials.

### Why should I take action?

- For your **health**: Smog can irritate your eyes, nose and throat. Or it can worsen existing heart and lung problems. In exceptional cases it may result in early death.
- For your **pocketbook**: the action you take (by limiting idling time and insulating your home, for instance) will save you energy and money.
- For your **quality of life**: when smog levels are high, especially during the afternoon, Health Canada recommends that you avoid or limit strenuous outdoor activities or engage in indoor activities instead.
- For the health of our **ecosystems**: air pollution has adverse effects on the environment, such as the loss of biodiversity and reduced forest productivity.
- For the health of our **economy**: air pollution costs a great deal to the economy and can make a region less attractive for investments. It also imposes a significant cost on the health care system.

### ... at work

- Reduce your energy consumption by turning off computers and lights when they are not in use, conserving paper by using two-sided printing, recycling and composting.
- Promote sustainable modes of transportation by installing showers, assigning the closest parking spots to carpoolers and installing secure bicycle racks.
- Get a few colleagues together to present the above options to managers.

### ... and on the road

- Consider different ways to use your car less. Where possible, walk, carpool, use public transportation and combine your trips to reduce the distances traveled.
- Avoid idling –10 seconds of idling use more fuel than restarting your engine.
- Keep your vehicle in good condition. For example, checking your tire pressure regularly will have a significant impact on your greenhouse gas emissions.

**One-Tonne CHALLENGE** aims to help all Canadians reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by one tonne, or approximately 20 percent. By reducing emissions, you will save money, protect our climate and contribute to a healthier environment. See how by visiting [www.climatechange.gc.ca](http://www.climatechange.gc.ca) or by calling 1-800-668-6767 for a free guide.



## TAKE UP THE COMMUTER CHALLENGE!

Groups and communities across Canada encourage the use of sustainable modes of transportation by organizing a Commuter Challenge during Environment Week and on Clean Air Day. It is an opportunity to try a sustainable means of transportation and to help your community win the challenge! For more information, visit [www.commuterchallenge.ca](http://www.commuterchallenge.ca).

### For more information

**Clean Air Day** – [www.cleanairday.com](http://www.cleanairday.com)

**Commuter Challenge** – [www.commuterchallenge.ca](http://www.commuterchallenge.ca)

**Canadian Environment Week** – [www.ec.gc.ca/e-week](http://www.ec.gc.ca/e-week)

**Clean Air Online** – [www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair-airpur](http://www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair-airpur)

**Climate Change and One-Tonne Challenge** – <http://www.climatechange.gc.ca>

**Energy Efficiency** – [www.oee.nrcan.gc.ca](http://www.oee.nrcan.gc.ca)

**Idle-Free Zone** – <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/transportation/idle-free-zone.cfm>

**Vehicle Emissions Inspection Clinics** – [www.ec.gc.ca/transport/clinics](http://www.ec.gc.ca/transport/clinics)

**Health and Air Quality** – [www.healthcanada.ca/air](http://www.healthcanada.ca/air)

**It's your health (air)** – [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/iyh](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/iyh)

**National Pollutant Release Inventory** – [www.ec.gc.ca/npri](http://www.ec.gc.ca/npri)

### Impact of the transportation sector

The transportation sector is one of the single largest sources of air pollution in Canada. In some urban areas, transportation can account for two-thirds of all the pollutants that create smog. The transportation sector also accounts for roughly 25 percent of Canadian greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change.

### Sustainable transportation

Sustainable modes of transportation offer an alternative to fuel-operated, single-occupant vehicles. They include car-pooling, public transportation, telecommuting and active transportation options, such as walking, biking and rollerblading. Choosing a sustainable mode of transportation will significantly reduce your own emissions and in turn, help improve the health of Canadians, reduce pressure on our ecosystems and contribute to the competitiveness of our economy.

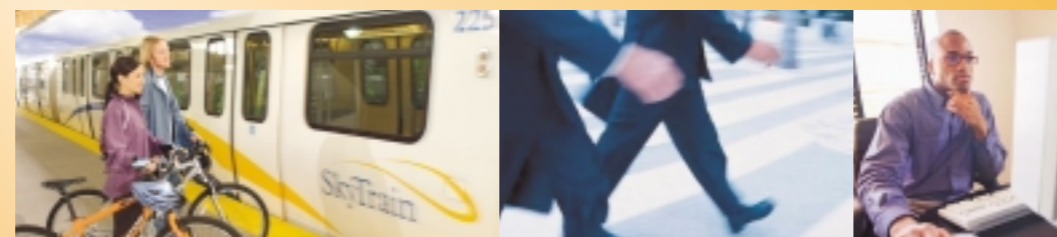
### CONTACT US

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Air Pollution Prevention Directorate

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[www.cleanairday.com](http://www.cleanairday.com)



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