

Give the Earth some *clean* air



June 7, 2006 June 6, 2007

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING Clean Air Day



Clean Air Day

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

cleanairday.com

The Clean Air Day partners' web site features resources to help you organize or participate in activities in your community, school or neighbourhood. Consult the **calendar of events** to see whether events are planned near you... or get inspired and organize your own activity!

Air quality and greenhouse gases

When non-renewable energy sources – such as fossil fuels – are used to power our vehicles, heat and cool our homes, and to manufacture goods, emissions and greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere which contribute to air pollution and climate change. These issues are therefore linked – and by using energy wisely you can take action on both!

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 is becoming 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, and allergies. Current research shows that even low levels of air pollution can be harmful, and for many forms of air pollution, there is no safe threshold.

Clean Air Online

Clean Air is a priority of the Government of Canada, and this new web site helps provide Canadians with the resources and tools they need to take informed, concrete action on air quality issues. Find out:

- Government of Canada actions (domestic and international).
- What the issues are and how they impact the life of every Canadian.
- What you can do to improve air quality.
- And much more...!

Visit **Clean Air Online** at: www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair-airpur



WHAT CAN I DO?

...at home

- Buy appliances with the ENERGY STAR® and help reduce the impact that refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, stoves, and washers and dryers have on your annual household energy use (average = 13%).
- Add insulation, caulking and weather-stripping to your home and make it more energy-efficient.
- If you buy a wood stove, choose one that's certified for low emissions by the *Environmental Protection Agency* (EPA) or the *Canadian Standards Association* (CSA B-415.1-00). This will significantly reduce the air particulate emissions that are a major contributor to winter smog.
- Use lawn mowers and snow blowers less often. And when buying any new gas-powered equipment, consider the new-generation engines with emissions reduction systems.
- Buy locally produced foods and products whenever 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! It takes much less energy to manufacture new products from recycled materials than from raw materials.

...at work

- Turn off computers and lights when they are not in use, conserve paper with two-sided printing, and recycle and compost like you would at home.
- Help employees choose sustainable modes of transportation: install secure bicycle racks, give premium parking spots to carpoolers and provide locker room & shower facilities.

...on the road

- Use your car less: walk, carpool, cycle, in-line skate or use public transit – sustainable transportation is good for the environment and for your pocketbook!
- Avoid idling –10 seconds of idling uses more fuel than restarting your engine.
- Keep your vehicle in good condition. For example, maintaining proper tire pressure will have a significant impact on your greenhouse gas emissions.

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**: reduce your exposure when air pollution levels are high by rescheduling strenuous outdoor activities.
- For the health of our **ecosystems**: air pollution has adverse effects on the environment, such as the loss of biodiversity and forest productivity.
- For the health of our **economy**: air pollution has big impacts on the economy and can make a region less attractive for investments. It also imposes significant costs on our health care system.



TAKE UP THE COMMUTER CHALLENGE!

During Environment Week and on Clean Air Day, use a sustainable mode of transportation and register for the Commuter Challenge. Sustainable transportation impacts both air-quality and climate change, so your participation addresses a wide range of environmental issues. Groups and communities have Challenges organized all across the country – **register and help your community win!** Visit www.commuterchallenge.ca.

For more information

Clean Air Day – www.cleanairday.com

Commuter Challenge – www.commuterchallenge.ca

Canadian Environment Week – www.ec.gc.ca/e-week

Clean Air Online – www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair-airpur

Energy Efficiency – www.oeenrncan.gc.ca

Idle-Free Zone – <http://oeenrncan.gc.ca/idling/>

Health and Air Quality – www.healthcanada.ca/air

National Pollutant Release Inventory – 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 count for two-thirds of all the pollutants that create smog. And because the transportation sector accounts for roughly 25 percent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, it significantly impacts climate change too.

Sustainable transportation

Sustainable modes of transportation offer an alternative to fuel-operated, single-occupant vehicles. These include car-pooling, public transit, telecommuting and active transportation options like walking, biking and in-line skating. By choosing a sustainable mode of transportation you significantly reduce your personal emissions, help improve the health of your community, reduce the pressure on our ecosystems and contribute to the competitiveness of our economy.

CONTACT US

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www.cleanairday.com



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