



# CLEAN AIR IS YOUR BUSINESS

Improve employee well-being (and air quality)

## Ozone & Air Quality

**Don't be fooled by clear skies. Ground-level ozone pollution is a problem in Greater Kansas City, and it affects the health of everyone in our region.**

Our atmosphere contains two kinds of ozone: the ozone layer high above the Earth that protects us from the sun's ultraviolet radiation; and ground-level ozone, which is harmful to our health.

Ground-level ozone forms when emissions from vehicle engines, lawn mowers and industry react with heat and sunlight.

Ground-level ozone makes it difficult for your lungs to absorb oxygen, limiting lung capacity and damaging delicate tissue. It is harmful for everyone, but even more so for children, the elderly and people with respiratory problems such as asthma.

Although it's true coal-burning industrial plants and chemical companies contribute to the problem, *half of all ozone-forming emissions come from everyday people doing everyday things.*

You want to see your employees thrive not only in the workplace, but at home and in the community.

By encouraging habits that reduce air pollution, you're helping your employees — and the entire community — lead healthier lives. And working with colleagues to make simple changes in daily activities builds teamwork in the workplace and provides a sense of accomplishment.



The Mid-America Regional Council's **Air Quality (AirQ) Workplace Partnership is a free educational program** designed to help you inform employees about making small changes in their everyday activities — small changes that can equal cleaner, healthier air for our entire region.

## Joining is easy!

- 1 Call 816/474-4240 or e-mail [airQ@marc.org](mailto:airQ@marc.org).
- 2 Appoint someone on your staff to serve as an **AirQ Coordinator**. This person will be the primary point of contact for your company.

### The AirQ Coordinator will:

- Relay Ozone Alerts to employees when poor air quality is forecast
- Display or distribute AirQ education materials
- Help promote employee awareness of air quality issues
- *(Optional)* Develop a simple strategy that helps employees reduce emissions (see inside pages)

### AirQ will provide:

- All promotional materials
- Educational talks, presence at fairs and other outreach upon request
- Fun and easy contests, activities and prizes that encourage employees to participate and help quantify the results of your efforts
- Promotion of your company on our Web site and in local media as an AirQ partner

GOOD

MODERATE

ORANGE ALERT

RED ALERT

Check the daily SkyCast at [www.marc.org/airQ](http://www.marc.org/airQ)

## Inside:

*More than 30 tips that will save you money and improve air quality*

# CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITIES

## Keep employees informed

- Appoint an AirQ Coordinator to develop and identify ways that your employees can react to Ozone Alerts
- Promote employee awareness of air quality issues and encourage action by distributing tips through:
  - E-mail
  - Lobby displays, fliers and posters
  - Newsletters
  - Seminars/training sessions
- Notify employees of Ozone Alert days via:
  - E-mail
  - Intranet
  - Network boot-up messages
  - Public address/paging system announcements
  - Bulletin boards
- Display the SkyCast on your intranet or network page

## Support clean air actions

- Provide incentives for employees who take action (such as flextime, raffle prizes, reserved parking or subsidized parking fees)
- Encourage commuting alternatives for employees, including vanpooling, carpooling, public transit, biking and walking:
  - Offer free or subsidized bus passes to employees — on Ozone Alert days, during the summer, or year-round
  - Support development of Park-and-Ride facilities at the urban fringe and along major corridors
  - Provide secure bike racks and shower facilities for employees who bike to work
  - Provide reserved parking for carpoolers
  - Provide electric parking spaces to encourage the use of electric cars
  - Become a RideShare Business Partner to encourage commuter alternatives. Visit [www.marc.org/rideshare](http://www.marc.org/rideshare) for more information



## Consider flexible scheduling

- Encourage compressed work weeks with extended hours
- Develop a flextime program that allows people to commute during non-peak travel hours
- Visit the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's "Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules" online at [www.opm.gov/oca/aws](http://www.opm.gov/oca/aws)



## Evaluate impacts of growth

- Use and promote green-building design and maintenance techniques that reduce energy and water consumption:
  - Use the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED standards for new construction or remodeling projects
  - Install reflective surfacing and roofing materials
  - Establish minimum tree-planting standards for new development
  - Promote strategic tree planting along streets and in parking lots
  - Use native landscaping
- Promote land-use planning practices that reduce dependence on automobiles
- Implement "Creating Quality Places" principles:
  - Link to surrounding areas that encourage walking and biking
  - Consider mixed-use development
  - Encourage transit-oriented development
  - Visit [www.marc2.org/cqp](http://www.marc2.org/cqp) to learn more

## Modify daily operations

- Delay or reschedule lawn maintenance on Ozone Alert days
- Postpone painting and pesticide use on Ozone Alert days
- Postpone vehicle refueling until the evening during ozone season
- Don't top off the tank when refueling
- Replace vehicle gas caps with broken seals or stripped threads
- Establish a fuel-tank inspection program to maintain and repair fuel tanks
- Encourage employees not to drive for short trips:
  - Subsidize or provide lunches on Ozone Alert days
  - Encourage brown-bag or take-out lunches
- Provide shuttle services to common dining areas and meeting facilities
  - Walk, bicycle or carpool to lunch and off-site meetings
  - Offer direct deposit of paychecks
- Employ energy-conservation measures:
  - Turn off lights and electronics daily
  - Purchase Energy Star-compliant equipment (See [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov))
  - Conduct an energy audit for existing buildings
  - Use green power when possible (See [www.epa.gov/greenpower](http://www.epa.gov/greenpower))
- Buy water-based paints, stains and sealers. When oil-based coatings must be purchased, check the label for low-volatile organic compound (low-VOC) content
- Establish or expand your recycling program



## Maintain your fleet

- Regularly maintain vehicles and adopt a policy of repairing small problems immediately
- Establish an idling reduction policy
- Educate drivers on fuel-efficient driving techniques
- Make vehicle selection for each trip based on number of passengers, cargo weight, and on-road/off-road use
- When purchasing new vehicles and equipment, consider using:
  - Gas/electric hybrid
  - Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)
  - Propane
  - Biodiesel
- Retrofit the emission-control systems of diesel vehicles:
  - Implement new exhaust-control technologies
  - Convert to alternative fuel
  - Add emission-reduction or idling-reduction software
- Repower or mandate early replacement of vehicles instead of rebuilding them
- Use tax incentives to promote expanded use of low-emissions technology

## Evaluate contractor requirements/guidelines

- Provide incentives in contract bids to encourage use of low-emission, electric or manual equipment
- Encourage the use of low-emission vehicles
- Encourage low-emission fleet status for off-road equipment
- Encourage use of low-VOC materials
- Establish a low-emission vehicle program that encourages the purchase or emission-control retrofitting of vehicles
- Require idling reduction practices

## Conduct business differently

- Encourage conference calls and videoconferencing
- Allow employees to work from home
- To help cut back on driving time, use online services for
  - Applications and permitting
  - Bill paying
  - Recreation and meeting reservations
  - Library book renewals and holds

# YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## Things your business can do today to improve air quality:

- Join the **AirQ Workplace Partnership** to keep employees informed about air quality issues and Ozone Alerts
- Support commuter alternatives such as carpooling, transit and telecommuting
- Modify operations and maintenance activities on Ozone Alert days
- Consider air quality impacts when you purchase vehicles, expand your facilities and work with contractors

*Look inside for more clean air strategies you can start using today.*



Clear Thinking. Clear Air.



## Programs to know about

### Clean Buses | Healthy Kids

[www.marc.org/airQ](http://www.marc.org/airQ)

School buses are the safest way to get children to school. But diesel bus emissions can be harmful to young passengers — and the community. Retrofitting buses with emissions-control devices reduces smog-forming pollutants, particulate matter and carbon monoxide. Clean Buses | Healthy Kids retrofits school buses with federal and state grants and supports an idling-reduction program.

### Smart Moves

[www.marc.org/kcsmartmoves](http://www.marc.org/kcsmartmoves)

Smart Moves is a long-term transit vision that integrates services throughout the Kansas City region. It features transit centers and services tailored to the needs of our communities.

### RideShare

[www.marc.org/rideshare](http://www.marc.org/rideshare)

RideShare is a free, publicly funded commuter service designed to inform people about affordable and environmentally friendly commuting options. These include carpooling, vanpooling, transit programs and employer-sponsored services such as flextime and telecommuting.

### Operation Green Light

[www.marc.org/transportation/ogl](http://www.marc.org/transportation/ogl)

Operation Green Light works with federal, state and local agencies to coordinate traffic signal timing plans and communication between traffic signal equipment across jurisdictional boundaries, reducing congestion.

### MetroGreen

[www.marc.org/metrogreen](http://www.marc.org/metrogreen)

MetroGreen is a proposed 1,144-mile interconnected system of public and private open spaces, greenways and trails designed to link seven counties in the Kansas City region.

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