



What is Clean Air Counts?

In 2000, the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus, in partnership with the U.S. EPA, the Illinois EPA, and the Delta Institute, launched the Clean Air Counts campaign to help combat air pollution and reduce smog in Chicago and the surrounding region.

A key component of that campaign is to encourage individuals and their households to reduce emissions produced by everyday activities, such as driving, mowing the lawn, and painting.

We hope you'll join and start improving the air quality in your neighborhood right away!

Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Illinois
Environmental Protection Agency
Delta Institute
Center for Neighborhood Technology



Did you
know
that **you**
can help
to clean
the air?



Did you know that in the Chicago region people just like you, living ordinary lives, contribute as much to air pollution as industrial operations?*

Did You Know?

Metropolitan Chicago is classified as a "severe nonattainment area," which means that it has repeatedly fallen short of air quality standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Smog is a particular problem. The two main contributors to smog are volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx). On warm days, VOCs and NOx react with heat and sunlight to form ozone, one of the principal components of smog.

Many common household products contain VOCs, including:[†]

- ◆ Gasoline and other fuels
- ◆ Household cleaners, disinfectants, and dry cleaning solvents
- ◆ Aerosol sprays, air fresheners, and cosmetic supplies
- ◆ Paints, varnishes, and paint strippers

We can see the results of poor air quality all around us. Air pollution, particularly ground-level ozone, can aggravate asthma, cause inflammation of lung tissue and respiratory problems, and lead to decreased lung capacity, even in healthy adults. Children are even more susceptible to health hazards associated with air pollution; they spend more time outside and their breathing rate is higher than adults, relative to their body weight and lung surface area.

*1999 Illinois Emissions Inventory

[†] US EPA. "Sources of Indoor Air Pollution-Organic Gases (Volatile Organic Compounds-VOCs)." <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/voc.html>

What Can You Do?

The best way to improve air quality is to reduce pollution at its source. Households can:

- ◆ Drive less
- ◆ Walk or bike whenever possible
- ◆ Purchase no- or low-VOC products
- ◆ Mow and fill your gas tank in the evening or cooler part of a summer day
- ◆ Use household products according to the directions in well-ventilated areas

Why Join the Campaign?

When your household joins Clean Air Counts, you'll have access to continually updated information about how we can reduce pollution, protect our children's health, and improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods just by taking a few simple steps!

- ◆ If you have questions about Clean Air Counts, contact the Air Quality staff at the Center for Neighborhood Technology at (773) 278-4800, ext. 170.
- ◆ You can also visit our website at www.cleanaircounts.org, which will soon (April 2004) have an emissions calculator that will allow you to track your emissions and how your adjusted activity has benefited air quality.
- ◆ Or just tear off the perforated panel, fill out the information and mail it to us, and become a Clean Air Counts household today!

Join Clean Air Counts to help us work together to improve the air quality in our region!