

Harris County
HCPHES
Public Health & Environmental Services

Herminia Palacio, M.D., M.P.H.
Executive Director
2223 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77027
Tele: (713) 439-6000
Fax: (713) 439-6080

Rita Obey
Chief
Office of Public Information
2223 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77027
Tele: (713) 439-6246
Fax: (713) 439-6362

September 1, 2006

****HEALTH ADVISORY****

For Immediate Release

Contact: Rita Obey
(713) 439-6293

Martha Garza
(713) 439-6193

**Air Quality Warning/Health Advisory
Air Quality in Harris County Reaches Level Red**

Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services (HCPHES) is issuing an **“Air Quality Warning/Health Advisory”** for the Harris County area. Level Red Ozone has been reached at multiple monitoring sites. High ozone levels may have harmful health effects.

“LEVEL RED” means that the air quality is considered **“Unhealthy” for all groups**. HCPHES recommends that people avoid prolonged outdoor exertion during Level Red Ozone conditions.

Active people of all ages are at higher risk of feeling harmful health effects. During physical activity, ozone penetrates deeper into the parts of the lungs that are more easily damaged. Individuals who have respiratory diseases may notice symptoms earlier and at lower ozone levels than less sensitive individuals.

Health effects of high ozone may include coughing, throat irritation, an uncomfortable feeling in the chest, and/or difficulty breathing. Ozone adds to people feeling more sensitive to allergens, the most common triggers of asthma attacks. Ozone can also increase the risk of respiratory infections.

2223 West Loop South. Houston, Texas 77027

www.harriscountyhealth.com

High ozone levels usually occur during daylight hours between 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. High ozone is usually short-lived and may impact various locations for a few hours.

If residents are planning or participating in an activity that will involve prolonged outdoor exertion, current ozone levels throughout the Harris-Galveston-Brazoria County area can be viewed by visiting the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality website at: http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/cgi-bin/compliance/monops/select_curlev?region12_cur.gif_map1.

To receive emails about ozone Watches and Warnings from specific ozone monitors, visit the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management website at: http://ozone.hcoem.org/ozone_subscribe.php and select "Subscribe to Ozone Alerts".

Individuals, especially parents, athletic coaches, school nurses, health care professionals and those with respiratory illnesses are encouraged to sign-up for these email notices.

For additional information, log on to www.harriscountyhealth.com/pcd or <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/compliance/monitoring/air/monops/ozonefacts.html>.