

Contact: Brenda Williams  
Projects Manager  
Alamo Area Council of Governments  
8700 Tesoro Drive, Suite 700  
San Antonio, TX 78217  
bwilliams@aacog.com  
Phone (210) 362-5246  
Fax (210) 225-5937



# News Release

## Health Alert: Ozone Season 2006 Begins April 1

**San Antonio, March 31, 2006** – April 1 marks the beginning of the 2006 Ozone Season for the Alamo Area, a season when all citizens need to stay informed and take simple steps to help reduce pollution.

### *Why does this affect me?*

Ozone Season 2006 marks the second year of a three-year monitoring period that will determine whether the San Antonio area can call itself the largest “clean air” region in the nation. Failure to meet the federal standard for ground-level ozone, based on measurements conducted in our region from 2005-2007, would take away that right. Violating federal air pollution standards can have economic consequences that impact our existing industries as well as our ability to attract new businesses to the area. Failure to meet the ozone standard would also create mobility challenges, and more importantly, negatively affect health.

Ground-level ozone, a major component of smog, is a health issue. According to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), exposure to ground-level ozone can cause: shortness of breath, coughing or wheezing, headaches and nausea, and throat and lung irritation. Ground-level ozone’s effects are most profound on children, senior citizens, and those with respiratory conditions such as asthma or emphysema. Citizens can reduce exposure to ozone by limiting outdoor activities during an Air Quality Health Alert, a day forecasted to reach unhealthy ozone levels. High concentrations of ozone pollution typically occur in our region’s air several times each summer, so it is important for citizens to know when air quality is poor and what they can do to protect their health.

### *How will I know when ozone pollution is high?*

When the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality forecasts high ozone pollution levels, the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) issues an Air Quality Health Alert to local media, governments, businesses, and individuals through fax, email, and text messaging services. Make sure to check the evening weather reports or the newspaper for the Air Quality Health Alert symbol and the air quality forecast. TxDOT displays Air Quality Health Alert warnings on the TransGuide system and many other organizations participate

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in the alert program by displaying yellow warning flags and banners. To receive free Air Quality Health Alert notifications, visit [www.aacog.com/air/alert](http://www.aacog.com/air/alert) and follow the registration instructions.

***What can I do?***

When you hear or see an Air Quality Health Alert, try to keep individuals who are most vulnerable to ozone pollution indoors. Even healthy individuals should avoid strenuous outdoor activity, such as exercise or chores, especially in the afternoon hours.

Because vehicles are a major source of ozone pollution in our region, the following are suggestions to help prevent ozone pollution:

- Drive Less
  - Share a ride to work or school.
  - Ride the bus.
  - Teleconference.
  - Walk or ride a bike.
  - Use online services, such as electronic banking.
- Refuel after 6 p.m.
- Maintain your vehicle: keep the tires properly inflated and have your vehicle serviced regularly as instructed by the owner's manual.

Get involved! For more information about air quality in the Alamo Area, visit [www.aacog.com/airT](http://www.aacog.com/airT).

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