

Air Quality Challenge: Do Your Part to Reduce Dust

Controlling dust pollution in our dry desert region is not an easy task. The Maricopa region is classified as a Serious Area for dust pollution, specifically for the pollutant known as PM-10 (particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less). If inhaled, these coarse particles can create health problems, especially in children, the elderly, and people with preexisting respiratory or cardiovascular diseases. That is why reducing dust pollution is of prime concern to the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG).

In addition to protecting public health, attaining the federal standards for PM-10 is important to our region for economic reasons. Penalties for not meeting the requirements of the Clean Air Act can include sanctions on business and industry and the loss of millions of dollars in federal highway funding.

Concern over dust pollution is why local governments across our region have implemented strict measures to control dust. Many industries and businesses have also stepped up to implement tough controls on dust-causing activities. We need everyone to do their part to reduce particulate pollution. There are a number of things you can do to make the air we breathe cleaner.

Remember: The dust we raise is the dust we breathe.

What You Can Do

- ❖ Don't drive or park on dirt. If you absolutely can't avoid driving over dirt, drive slowly.
- ❖ Avoid using leaf blowers and other equipment that raise a lot of dust. Avoid using gas-powered lawn and garden equipment.
- ❖ Reduce fireplace and woodstove use and don't use your wood-burning fireplace on no-burn days.
- ❖ Ride ATVs and other off-road vehicles in authorized areas only and never on high pollution advisory days. For authorized places to ride, visit the Arizona Game and Fish website at www.azgfd.gov/pdfs/outdoor_recreation/ohv/atv_brochure.pdf
- ❖ Don't burn leaves, trash, or other materials.
- ❖ Maintain your landscape. Cover loose dirt with vegetation or gravel.
- ❖ Report serious offenders to the Maricopa County Air Quality Department: 602-372-2703.
- ❖ ***Disturbing the crust raises dust.*** Avoid any activities that disturb the naturally-occurring protective layer of crust, especially on high pollution or high-wind days.