

NEWS

for immediate release



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HIGH AIR POLLUTION ADVISORY FOR PARTICULATE MATTER IS IN EFFECT

(Phoenix)— The Maricopa County Environmental Services Department (MCESD) has issued a High Air Pollution Advisory (HPA) for particulate matter that will remain in effect from **10:00 a.m. Wednesday, October 17, 2001 to 10:00 a.m. Thursday, October 18, 2001** for the entire Phoenix Metropolitan area.

As of 7:00 a.m. today, the Central Phoenix air-monitoring site recorded a 97 on the Air Quality Index (AQI) for the 24-hour period for particulate matter. A strong high-pressure system continues to dominate weather over the southwest. Dry air, low winds, and above normal temperatures will continue for least another day. Particulate levels have dramatically increased over the last 24 hours. The upper level airflow is from the west-northwest. Surface pressure gradients are moderate with winds forecasted to be 5 - 10 M.P.H. in the morning, decreasing to light by the afternoon. The Upper Atmospheric Sounding shows a 6-7° C temperature inversion. With warm temperatures, light winds, and a moderate temperature inversion, carbon monoxide should be in the good range, while particulate levels should be in the moderate to unhealthy for sensitive range.

Particulate matter comes from vehicle emissions, unpaved roads, farming, industry, and fireplaces. Today's particulate matter HPA is a preventive measure to help avert air pollution from the unhealthy range. Predicting particulate matter concentrations is not an exact science and MCESD uses best judgment when declaring an HPA.

Health Effects: When inhaled, particulate matter invades the respiratory system's natural defenses and lodges deep in the bronchial tubes. Normal body defenses (coughing and sneezing) do not remove these harmful pollutants. Particulate matter can increase the number and severity of asthma attacks, cause or aggravate bronchitis and other lung disease, and reduce the body's ability to fight infections. Certain people are especially vulnerable to adverse health effects from PM-10 emissions. These "sensitive groups" include children, the elderly, exercising adults, and those suffering from asthma and bronchitis. Those individuals should minimize outdoor activity and take precautions.

During the HPA, Maricopa County is encouraging residents to do the following to help reduce particulate pollution:

- Ride the bus, carpool or telecommute.
- Eliminate all unnecessary driving and/or combine trips.
- Do not use your fireplace or woodstove unless it is an EPA-approved fireplace or woodstove.
- Keep your tires inflated to proper levels and your car tuned.
- Change your oil every 3,000 to 5,000 miles.
- To find a carpool or vanpool partner, call Valley Metro at (602) 262-RIDE or register on line at www.sharetheride.com.

For more information on High Air Pollution Advisories, call the Maricopa County Air Quality Update at 506-6400, go to www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/AIR/airday.asp, or call the Clean Air Hotline at 1-800-CLEAN-UP.