

NCTCOG FACT SHEET

July 2024

QUICK TAKE

Dallas-Fort Worth Nonattainment Area:

Many Dallas-Fort Worth area counties do not meet the EPA's regulation for ozone pollution, giving the region additional environmental responsibilities when completing transportation improvements. The nonattainment counties are Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise.

What is Ozone?

Ozone (O₃) is a gas formed in the atmosphere when three oxygen atoms combine. Ozone is found both high in the stratosphere and near the ground. Ground-level ozone, which is harmful to our health, forms when nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) are released in the air and mix in the presence of sunlight. High concentrations of ozone usually occur during the summer.

Where does it come from?

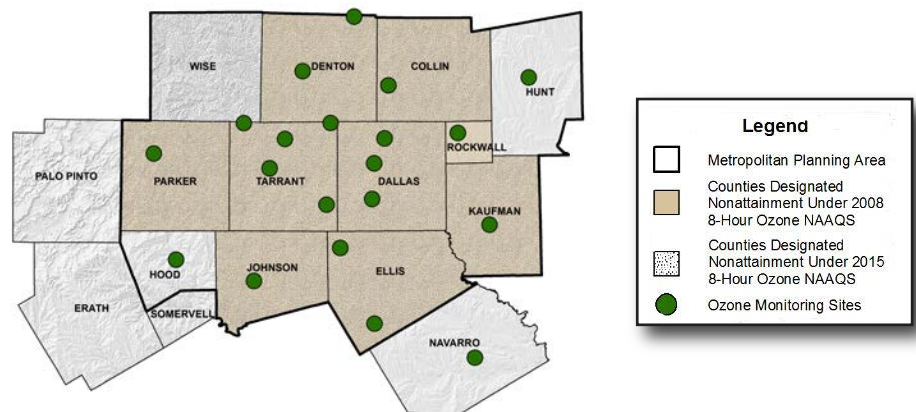
Ozone comes from many sources. In DFW, mobile sources (vehicles, construction equipment, locomotives, aircraft, etc.) account for around 67% of NO_x emissions.

Air Quality Essential to DFW Transportation

In North Texas, transportation planners have more to think about than how to get people where they are going more efficiently. Ten Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area counties are out of compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 2008 ozone standard of 75 parts per billion (ppb), while nine of those counties (excluding Rockwall County) are out of compliance with EPA's 2015 ozone standard of 70 ppb.

Although there are numerous reasons for this, transportation professionals ensure mobility improvements do not negatively impact the air. The region must implement measures to improve its air quality or face future sanctions from the EPA and potentially lose transportation funding. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) works closely with regional partners to develop and implement strategies, policies and programs to enhance air quality. NCTCOG periodically allows public and private entities to compete for funding intended to reduce the emissions of their fleets and purchase cleaner equipment. NCTCOG also uses programs for the public to participate in the process. Travel Demand Management and Transportation Systems Management strategies also help NCTCOG improve air quality.

Ozone Nonattainment Areas with Monitor Locations



The design value determines attainment status. This is the three-year average of the fourth-highest value recorded at any given monitor.

For real time monitor data, visit https://www.tceq.texas.gov/cgi-bin/compliance/monops/8hr_attainment.pl.

Categories of Emissions Sources

AREA – Bakeries, paint shops, dry cleaners

NON-ROAD MOBILE – Construction, agriculture

OFF-ROAD MOBILE – Aircraft, locomotives

POINT – Cement facilities, power plants

OIL and GAS – Production, drill rigs

BIOGENICS – Vegetation, wildfires

ON-ROAD MOBILE – Cars, trucks, buses

How is Ozone Harmful?

Ozone in the upper atmosphere is beneficial and serves as a protective layer blocking damaging ultraviolet rays from the sun. Ground-level ozone is potentially harmful. Studies indicate elevated levels of this “bad ozone” may make breathing more difficult, increase the frequency of asthma episodes, reduce the body’s ability to resist respiratory infections and pose a risk to the environment, wildlife, agriculture and manufactured structures.

History

Ozone is one of six pollutants governed by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) set by the EPA. The Dallas-Fort Worth area is subject to two ozone standards, i.e., the severe nonattainment area of 10 counties under the 2008 ozone NAAQS of 75 ppb and the serious nonattainment area of nine counties under the 2015 ozone NAAQS of 70 ppb. NCTCOG works with regional partners on plans, programs, projects, policies and partnerships to reduce ozone-forming emissions in an effort to meet EPA ozone NAAQS and help residents breathe easier.

Regional Efforts

NCTCOG administers various air quality programs such as eliminating unnecessary idling, encouraging fleet modernization and providing financial incentives. For more information, visit <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air>.

Air Pollution Alert System

Residents can sign up to receive air pollution alerts when ozone levels are forecast to be high. These alerts indicate that air quality is likely to reach unhealthy levels within 24 hours. The email alerts help residents, businesses industries and governments make decisions that contribute to cleaner air. It is recommended people stay indoors or limit their outdoor activity when ozone levels are high. The elderly and children, as well as those with respiratory issues, could suffer severe health problems from prolonged exposure even when the air quality is only moderately unhealthy. Residents can make small changes year-round, such as carpooling, taking transit, or telecommuting to help reduce emissions levels and decrease the number of bad ozone days. To sign up for air pollution alert emails, visit <https://www.airnorthtexas.org/signup>.

Particulate Matter Standard

The EPA has announced the strengthening of the NAAQS for particulate matter (PM2.5), commonly known as soot. To reflect the new scientific understanding of the effects of particulate matter pollution, the EPA is upgrading the primary (health-based) annual PM2.5 standard from 12 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³) to 9.0 µg/m³. This means Dallas and Tarrant counties may be in nonattainment of the standard when it takes effect in 2026.



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

Contact Us | 817-695-9240 | transinfo@nctcog.org @NCTCOGtrans

