

FACT SHEET
EPA TO RECONSIDER OZONE POLLUTION STANDARDS

- On September 16, 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it would reconsider the 2008 national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone, the primary component of smog.
- The health effects associated with ozone exposure include respiratory health problems ranging from decreased lung function and aggravated asthma to increased emergency department visits, hospital admissions and premature death. The environmental effects associated with seasonal exposure to ground-level ozone include adverse effects on sensitive vegetation, forests, and ecosystems.
- EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson will reconsider the ozone standards to ensure that two of the nation's most important air quality standards are clearly grounded in science, protect public health with an adequate margin of safety, and are sufficient to protect the environment.
- The Agency will propose any needed revisions to the ozone standards by December 2009 and issue a final decision by August 2010.
- The ozone standards set in 2008 were not as protective as recommended by EPA's panel of science advisors, the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC).
- The reconsideration will be based on the scientific and technical record used in the March 2008 review, which included more than 1,700 scientific studies.
- EPA will work with states to accelerate the implementation of any new standards. This will limit any delays associated with moving to any new standards.
- States, tribes and EPA work together to ensure clean air after a NAAQS is set. The first step is designating areas as meeting or not meeting the standards, which can be resource-intensive. To reduce the workload for states during the interim period of reconsideration, the agency will propose to stay the 2008 standards for the purpose of attainment (meeting standards) and nonattainment (not meeting standards) area designations. The stay will allow states and EPA to prepare for an accelerated ozone designation process for the reconsidered standards to be completed by August 2011. EPA will work with states, local governments and tribes to ensure that air quality is protected during that time.
- EPA will continue to require permitting of new and modified air pollution sources under the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) program for the 2008 ozone standards. In addition, EPA and states will continue to implement the 1997 ozone standards.
- The reconsideration affects both the "primary" ozone standard, designed to protect public health, and the "secondary" standard, designed to protect the environment. EPA issued the ozone standards on March 12, 2008, and set both standards at a level of 0.075 parts per million (ppm).
- In May 2008, states, environmental groups and industry groups filed petitions with the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals for review of the 2008 ozone standards. In March 2009, the court

granted EPA's request to stay the litigation so the new administration could review the standards and determine whether they should be reconsidered.

Expected Schedule

Proposed Reconsidered NAAQSDecember 2009
Final Reconsidered NAAQS.....August 2010
Final DesignationsAugust 2011
State Implementation Plans (SIPs) due.....December 2013