

ANDREW J. SPANO, Westchester County Executive
JOSHUA LIPSMAN, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health
SUSAN TOLCHIN, Director of Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 31, 2007

AIR QUALITY ALERT ISSUED FOR TODAY

The Westchester County Department of Health is alerting residents that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has issued an air quality advisory for today, Thursday May 31st, for Westchester County and neighboring areas. The pollutant of concern is ozone.

Ozone is the principal component of the mixture of air pollutants known as "smog" that is produced from the action of sunlight on air contaminants from automobile exhausts and other sources. Ozone levels are most likely to be elevated in the afternoon and early evening on hot, sunny days. Residents can stay informed about current ozone conditions by calling the New York State DEC Air Quality Hotline at 1-800-535-1345.

When ozone levels are elevated, the Westchester County Department of Health recommends limiting strenuous physical activity outdoors to reduce the risk of adverse effects. People who may be especially sensitive to the effects of ozone exposure include the very young, those who exercise outdoors or are involved in strenuous outdoor work, and those with pre-existing respiratory problems such as asthma.

Ozone exposure has been linked with adverse health effects. Nose and throat irritation, respiratory symptoms, and decreases in lung function have been observed in healthy persons who were exercising outdoors and breathing air containing elevated levels of ozone. Respiratory symptoms include shortness of breath, chest pain, and coughing, which may occur in both adults and children. People experiencing such symptoms should speak with a health care provider.

To help reduce air pollution:

- Conserve energy

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- Drive less, ride your bike or walk
- Carpool
- Make sure your car is well-tuned
- Take care not to spill gasoline when filling the tank of your car, lawn mower or recreation equipment
- Make sure that chemical product lids are closed tightly

For more information, please call the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000 or visit the Health Department website at www.westchestergov.com/health.

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