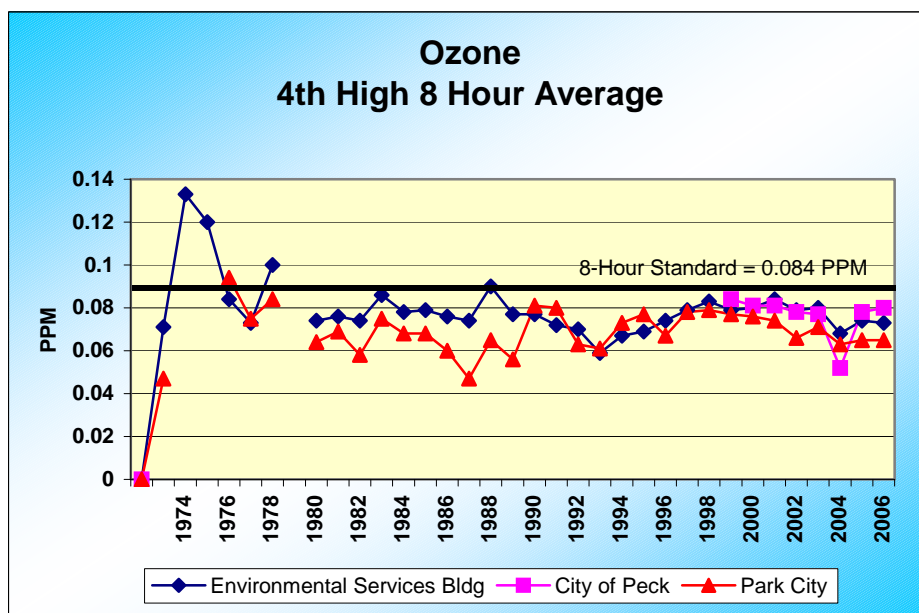


EPA Proposes Stricter Ozone Limit: Wichita MSA May Be Impacted

The Issue:

On June 20, 2007, EPA proposed to strengthen the national ambient air quality standards for ground-level ozone, the primary component of smog. The current limit for ozone is 0.08 ppm. The proposal recommends an ozone standard within a range of 0.070 to 0.075 parts per million (ppm) which is supposed to reflect new scientific evidence about ozone and its effects on people and public welfare.

Three monitors measure ozone levels in Sedgwick County. One is near the Sedgwick-Summer County line at Peck to measure air moving in from the south. Another is at Park City to measure the air as it moves past Wichita. The third monitor is located at the City's Environmental Services Building at 1900 E. Ninth Street to measure the air near the central downtown corridor. The 8-hour standard for these three monitors are Peck – 0.078 ppm, Park City - 0.062 ppm and Environmental Services – 0.074 ppm.



EPA is proposes to lower ozone standard between 0.070 ppm - 0.075 ppm

Communities and Cities Potentially Impacted:

Ground-level ozone concentrations at all three monitoring sites demonstrate compliance with the current ozone standard. If the standard is revised downward to 0.075 or below, one or both of these ozone monitors will probably be exceeded, causing the entire Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (Counties of Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey, and Sumner) to violate the ozone standard. Areas designated as nonattainment, even after reducing their ozone levels to comply, remain a maintenance area for an additional 10 years.

Ozone Is Caused by Sunlight and Air Emission Reaction:

Ground-level ozone is not emitted directly into the air, but is created through a reaction of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compound emissions in the presence of sunlight. Emissions from industrial facilities, electric utilities, motor vehicle exhaust, gasoline vapors, and chemical solvents are the major man-made sources of these ozone precursors.

Effects/Impacts:

The **positive** effect will be largely related to improved health and environmental benefits. The benefits would be in the form of reduced hospital and doctor's office visits, increased employee productivity due to reduced sick leave usage, reduced insurance claims, and reduced use of medications (asthma inhalers, etc).

The **negative** effects are many and include:

- Issues for local governments - transportation projects would have to include studies proving that each project did not contribute additional air pollution in the urban area. Funds spent on these studies would be deducted from the actual amount available for road construction and would increase the length of time needed to complete construction of each project. Transportation projects paid for by local funds would have to meet the same requirements.
- Existing businesses would be limited in their plans to expand and new businesses would have to show that their activities would not contribute to increased air pollution. Businesses may look to relocated expansion projects in cities that have cleaner air. New businesses might decide to not locate in Wichita.
- Citizens could be impacted in several ways. Annual vehicle emissions testing could become mandatory. If ozone nonattainment creates a negative impact on the local economy, some citizens could become unemployed, thus leading to a cycle of less spending and increased unemployment.

The Cost Impact:

In 2005, the AQTF requested that Environmental Services staff to provide an estimate of what the cost would be if the Wichita MSA became an ozone nonattainment area. Staff compiled data from seven cities of various sizes across the U.S. that were currently ozone nonattainment, and found that the costs are somewhat related to the size of the MSA. **For an MSA the size of Wichita, the estimated cost to local government, local businesses, and citizens would be approximately \$10,000,000 per year for at least ten years.**

EPA Timeline:

EPA is expected to propose a revised standard by March 12, 2008.

Based on that date, EPA estimates the following implementation schedule:

- Baseline years are 2007, 2008 and 2009.
- By June 2009: States make recommendations for nonattainment areas to be designated.
- By 2010 - 2013: EPA makes final designations of areas and states must submit plans to comply.
- 2013 to 2030: States are required to meet the standard, with deadlines depending on the severity of the problem.