

Reporting the Air Quality Story: What Works

Local Media

How to get Air Quality in
Print

Howard Libit

Baltimore Sun

Baltimore Sun

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Air quality on the weather page

THE WEATHER

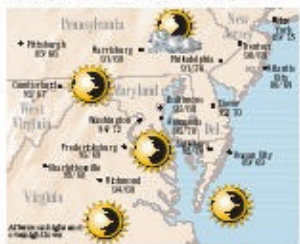


Norm Lewis' forecast
 High pressure will dominate through mid week with very warm conditions and high humidity. The heat and humidity will give us a good chance of afternoon showers and thunderstorms today and tomorrow. Expect cooler weather for the end of the week.

Today	Overnight	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mostly sunny High 93	Partly cloudy Low 88	Afternoon storms 84/60	Some showers 83/63	Some showers 82/62	Partly cloudy 78/59

Regional outlook

The heat is on, with temperatures in the mid 90s, while New England will have rain and cooler temperatures.



Almanac data

Day of the year (Frisch)
 Last 24 hours: 018
 Prev. 24 hrs: 157
 Local time: 5:57
 Local date: 6/11/02
 Next to day: 9:29 on 12/8
 Prev. 10 days: 14:24
 Normal precip. year to date: 65.8
 Days since last measurable precip.: 4

Yesterday's temperatures
 Downtown: High 89 Low 71
 0000: High 87 Low 69
 Normal temperature: High 81 Low 58
 City records: High 99 in 1904 Low 29 in 1980

Year's age: High 84 Low 57
 Heat index yesterday: 67%
 Relative humidity at 5 p.m.: 80%
 Actual air temperature: 82° F
 Dewpoint: 67° F

Yesterday's temps at 800
 100°
 90°
 80°
 70°
 60°
 50°
 40°
 30°
 20°
 10°
 0°
 -10°
 -20°
 -30°
 -40°
 -50°
 -60°
 -70°
 -80°
 -90°
 -100°

Astronomical data
 Sunrise in morning: 5:48 a.m.
 Sunset tonight: 8:08 p.m.
 Moonset today: 9:11 p.m.
 Mooned today: 100%

Today's tides

City	High	Low
Harrisburg	11:09	4:20
Port Jervis	1:05	12:56
Shady Side	1:47	8:41
Day Park	4:53	10:29
Downing	1:05	2:45
Chatham	1:05	3:12

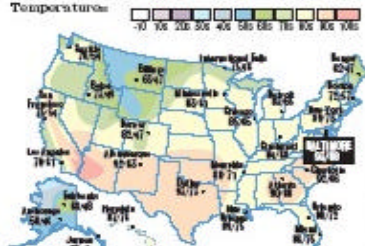
At the resorts

City	Today	Tomorrow
Marble City	89/69	70/48
C. Parkers	89/78	75/55
Deep Creek	89/69	71/50
Coopers	89/69	71/50

Sundial information
 Call 410-752-3880 on a Black Enterprise subscriber card only.
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Today's national forecast

A low-pressure system will produce a chance of scattered showers and thunderstorms from the central Plains to the upper Midwest. A warm front will extend to the east, producing scattered showers and thunderstorms from New England to the Ohio Valley. Most of the Southeast and the mid-Atlantic region will be sunny to partly cloudy with very warm and humid conditions. Afternoon showers and thunderstorms are possible over Florida.



National temperatures

City	Temp	High	Low
Atlanta	77	82	62
Baltimore	68	73	53
Boston	68	73	53
Chicago	68	73	53
Dallas	82	87	62
Denver	68	73	53
Detroit	68	73	53
Houston	82	87	62
Los Angeles	77	82	62
Miami	82	87	62
Minneapolis	68	73	53
New York	82	87	62
Philadelphia	82	87	62
Portland	68	73	53
San Francisco	68	73	53
Seattle	68	73	53
St. Louis	68	73	53
Washington	82	87	62

Traveler's forecast

East to New York: Partly cloudy.
 West to Philadelphia: Partly cloudy.
 East to New York: Partly cloudy.
 West to Philadelphia: Partly cloudy.

Marine weather

Chesapeake Bay
 Visibility: 3-10 miles
 Water temp: 77°
 Waves: 3-5 ft
 Winds: 5-10 mph

Atlantic, off Ocean City
 Visibility: 3-10 miles
 Water temp: 77°
 Waves: 3-5 ft
 Winds: 5-10 mph

National high yesterday

Chicago: 82°
 New York: 82°
 Philadelphia: 82°
 Washington: 82°
 Dallas: 82°
 Houston: 82°
 Miami: 82°
 San Francisco: 68°
 Seattle: 68°
 St. Louis: 68°

National average for the 40 contiguous states

64.8 a.m.
 85.0 p.m.
 69.0 a.m.
 95.1 p.m.

Precipitation

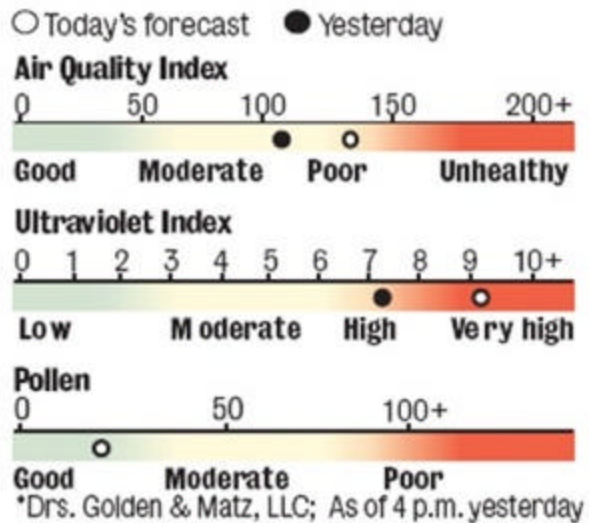
Percent of rain today



Foreign temperatures

City	Temp	High	Low
London	68	73	53
Paris	68	73	53
Rome	68	73	53
Tokyo	68	73	53
Sydney	68	73	53
Auckland	68	73	53
Wellington	68	73	53
Christchurch	68	73	53
Dunedin	68	73	53
Hamilton	68	73	53
Wellington	68	73	53
Christchurch	68	73	53
Dunedin	68	73	53
Hamilton	68	73	53

Up close on the weather page



Who writes about air quality?

- Environment reporters
- Science reporters
- Health and fitness reporters
- Neighborhood reporters
- Any reporter who might be assigned a daily weather story

Types of Air Quality Stories

(What we're writing
about already)

“Bad” Weather Days



Heat soars again, hits 99

Air pollution stays at dangerous levels; no letup likely today

'Hang in there'

Canadian cold front expected to bring relief for weekend

By FRANK D. ROYLANCE
AND JOANNA C. DAEMMICH
SUN STAFF

Maryland's week in Dante's Inferno dragged on yesterday, with dangerous air pollution levels, afternoon highs in the mid- to upper-90s and heat-index readings hitting 118 degrees.

It was 97 degrees at the airport and 99 degrees at the Maryland Science Center when temperatures peaked just after 2 p.m.

Today will be nearly as damnable. But salvation is en route for the weekend, in the form of a Canadian cold front bearing showers, thunderstorms and milder afternoon

"Bad" Ozone Days

Wave of code red pollution expected

Ozone seen hitting dangerous level throughout region

By HEATHER DEWAR
SUN STAFF

For the first time this year, the Baltimore area is in for a three- or four-day stretch of air pollution high enough to be unhealthy for everyone, according to forecasters at

Forecasters predict poor air quality today in Md.

By HEATHER DEWAR
SUN STAFF

Forecasters say air pollution levels will reach the code-red danger zone today for the first time this year, soaring high enough to be unhealthy for everyone by midafternoon.

Hot weather is expected to push concentrations of ground-level ozone, the main ingredient in smog, to 128 parts per billion in Central Maryland. Forecaster Matthew G. Seybold of the state Department of the Environment said westerly winds are carrying pollutants from the Ohio Valley

Blanket of ozone drifts into Md.

First Code Red this year; similar alerts expected

Staying indoors recommended

By DENNIS O'BRIEN
SUN STAFF

Yesterday's heat brought an unwanted guest to Maryland for the first time this year — really bad air.

State environmental officials issued their first Code Red ozone alert yesterday and said they might issue similar warn-

Tips for Health

HOME & FAMILY

HEALTH & FITNESS

Code Red air weighs heavy on athletes

High ozone levels affect all who venture outside, including the most fit

By STEPHANIE SHAPIRO
SUN STAFF

Because it was a Code Red day, and extremely hot as well, Jessica Clements and her fiance, Josh Itzoe, had already delayed their run until after the sun set and the air was less polluted.

Usually, the Baltimore couple can easily run five or six miles around the Inner Harbor. On this steamy summer night, though, they felt "out of sorts" after three miles and quit early.

"Both of us were commenting on how we felt dehydrated... and how difficult it was to breathe," says Clements, a 24-year-old public relations specialist at Union Memorial Hospital.

Clements, who is training with Itzoe for a half-marathon next month, is an avid athlete and dancer. But when sunlight and pollution combine to produce high levels of ozone, even she and Itzoe, a former minor league baseball player in his late 20s, must rethink their training plans.

Code Red is considered an unhealthy level on the Air Quality Index, a scale devised by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Used by state and local agencies, the index measures the presence of ground-level ozone as well as minute particles and toxic pollutants. In Maryland, four colors — green, yellow, orange and red — correspond to air quality levels ranging from "good" to "very unhealthy."

Code Red levels of ozone can hamper breathing and trigger chest pains and coughing in anyone, healthy or otherwise. Code Orange pollution levels are also considered unhealthy for those with asthma and other respiratory conditions.

Avoid outdoor exercise

The perils of exercising in high-ozone conditions can be profound for those with asthma and/or allergies, says Dr. Sadhir Sekhsaria, medical director of the



GENE DWORNYAK JR. / SUN STAFF

Jessica Clements and Josh Itzoe go for their run around sunset instead of earlier, because the air is less polluted in the evening.

As head coach in Maryland for Team-in-Training, a fund-raising program for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Jeff Sanborn trains both novice and experienced runners for marathons. On Code Red days, they still must train, but

says. But, "for whatever reason, [children] don't seem to have the same pain response... In essence, they don't have the same warnings or cues from the body to stop exercising."

Maryland law requires camps to have

Tips for Health

Exercise strategies for Code Red days

The Maryland Department of the Environment operates a Web site (www.mde.state.md.us/Air/AirForecast.asp) that allows area residents to monitor air quality. The media also report high ground-level ozone alerts.

An average of 10 Code Red days occur every summer in Maryland, according to an MDE spokesman. If you exercise on Code Red days:

- Work out early in the morning or after the sun sets, when ozone levels aren't as high.
- Slow down. "You don't need to push it quite as much," trainer Jeff

Sanborn says.

- Those with allergies or asthma should follow prescribed medical protocols.
- When possible, exercise or swim indoors in an air-conditioned environment with closed windows.
- When running, walking or biking, choose shady trails that are cooler and removed from exhaust fumes.
- Don't forget water. "Anything in the dead of summer, especially over four miles, you definitely want to carry water with you," runner Jessica Clements says.
- If exercising outside at night, wear reflective material.

Unhealthy Air Sources

Old power plants, clean air dilemma

■ *Pollution: Environmentalists fear that President Bush will aggravate air problems in Eastern states such as Maryland by phasing out emissions regulation in the Midwest.*

By DAVID L. GREENE
SUN NATIONAL STAFF

BRILLIANT, Ohio — A faint yellow gas wafts from smokestacks along the Ohio River. It is full of hazardous pollutants, which is nothing new here in the core of the industrial Midwest, a gritty region built on manufacturing and heavy industry and accustomed to the ill effects.

But 300 miles and a world away in Washington, this gas, how far it travels in the wind and whom it harms are at the heart of an intensifying fight over how to generate power while still protecting the environment.

For both sides, there is this new reality: George W. Bush has made energy production a centerpiece of his presi-



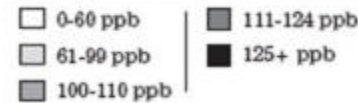
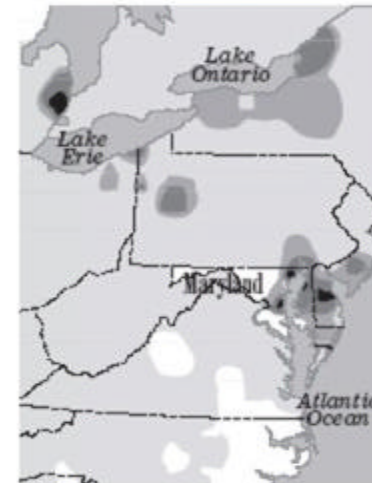
CHRISTOPHER COLINSON: SPECIAL TO THE SUN

Pride of Ohio: The Cardinal power plant sits beside the Ohio River, but wind can carry its pollution to Baltimore.

Eastern United States.

Peak ozone values

Baltimore and Washington suffered some of the nation's worst ground-level ozone pollution on June 27, 2001



*ppb-Parts per billion
SOURCE: EPA

LAMONT W. HARVEY: SUN STAFF

Source: Baltimore Sun, September 7, 2001.

Air Quality & the EPA

EPA relaxes rule on clean air

Coal-fired plants to save billions; renovations won't require pollution curbs

Increased efficiency predicted

Environmental groups condemn the decision

By DAVID L. GREENE
SUNNATIONAL STAFF

WASHINGTON — In a victory for industry, the Bush administration eased a regulation in the Clean Air Act yesterday so older, coal-fired power plants will no longer have to install pollution curbs when they renovate.

Officials said the move, perhaps the Bush administration's most significant environmental action to date, will enable many power plants, refineries and factories to increase efficiency and invest in technology to reduce pollution.

Court blocks air pollution regulation

Maryland, 11 states seek to prevent rules changes

By HOWARD LIBIT
SUN STAFF

Maryland and 11 other states challenging the Bush administration's new air pollution rules won an injunction in federal court yesterday blocking some of the most critical regulations from taking effect.

The order from the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia stops the Environmental Protection Agency from putting in place this week changes to the Clean Air Act regarding coal-fired power plants and other industrial facilities.

Source: Baltimore Sun,
August 28, 2003;
December 25, 2003.

Air Quality & the EPA

The Sun : Friday, Dec. 5, 2003: Page 3A

THE NATION



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Blimp. The blimp came loose from a fertilizer pile beside a plant 12-foot-long blimp was injured.

EPA introduces program to reduce air pollution

Maryland is skeptical that 'cap and trade' plan will actually cut smog

By HEATHER DEWAR
SUN STAFF

Announcing a new, market-driven air pollution control program yesterday, the chief of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said the plan would help rid Maryland of persistent smog that threatens the health of one in three state residents.

But state officials, pollution experts and environmentalists disagreed, saying that the plan won't guarantee a solution to

the country's worst ozone pollution, was never able to meet the old, more lenient standard.

"The biggest problem we've got is ozone transport from out of state," said Kendi P. Philbrick, acting secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environ-

ment. In a letter to the EPA in July, Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. said Maryland's own pollution reductions are "inseparable" from equally steep cuts in the Midwest. He asked the federal agency to explain how it would force upwind states to clean their air.

"They ignored it"

In unusually harsh criticism

ground-level ozone, or smog — a powerful respiratory irritant.

The EPA wants to cut sulfur dioxide emissions by 70 percent by 2015 and would cut nitrogen oxide by 40 percent.

The "trade" portion of the program would allow utilities that can reduce pollution below target levels to sell the excess reductions as pollution credits. Companies that can't meet the goals would be able to comply by buying these credits, even if they don't actually reduce pollutants.

"This is the largest air pollution reduction in more than a decade," Leavitt said. Power plants would have to install new equipment at a cost of about

Toxic Chemicals

EPA says Baltimore air among the worst

Area residents in top 5%
of Americans endangered
by toxic pollutants

By HEATHER DEWAR
SUN STAFF

An Environmental Protection Agency assessment of air pollution levels nationwide places residents of Baltimore and three neighboring counties among the top 5 percent of Americans whose health is endangered by toxic pollutants.

Toxic chemical releases up slightly

Rise linked to demand
for electricity from plants
in Anne Arundel County

By HOWARD LIBIT
SUN STAFF

Toxic chemical releases increased slightly in Maryland from 2000 to 2001, largely because of increased demand for electricity from coal and oil-burning power generating plants in Anne Arundel County.

That puts Maryland in contrast to the nation, where toxic

to include limits on mercury emissions from power plants.

In the mid-Atlantic region, toxic releases declined by 8.6 percent to 425 million pounds in 2001, according to the report.

Federal officials said the annual reporting requirement, with results now available on the EPA's Web site, has prompted industry to cut pollution. "It shows real progress in reducing chemical releases," Donald S. Welsh, EPA's mid-Atlantic regional administrator, said in a written statement.

Almost all of Maryland's toxic release increases can be attrib-

of all the chemicals released in Maryland in 2001.

The increase resulted from higher demand for electricity in 2001, said Bonnie Johansen, a government affairs representative for Constellation Energy Group, which owns the plants.

Despite the large quantities of chemicals released, Johansen said Constellation has worked to reduce emissions of chemicals such as nitrogen oxide, a key component to the creation of ozone that leads to unhealthy air quality in the summer.

"We have taken our money and directed it toward the

Dust Particles

Page 10A : Thursday, Oct. 2, 2003 : The Sun

THE NATION

Dust from demolition fades quickly, study finds

Sharp rise in particles was expected, authors say

By HOWARD LIBIT
SUN STAFF

Explosive demolition of buildings can produce significant increases in harmful airborne dust particles, but the consequences are short-lived, according to a study released yesterday by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public

Health.

The study — one of the first to examine the effects of explosive demolitions on air quality — concluded that spectators should be discouraged from standing near the site, and that neighbors should stay indoors or try to be upwind from the area.

"There was a huge spike in air particles associated with the implosion, which I think was very intuitive," said Timothy J. Buckley, the study's lead author and

an associate professor in the school's environmental health sciences department. "What came as a surprise is that I would have expected that the concentrations would have remained elevated for some time — on the order of hours — beyond the implosion. That didn't happen."

Published in this month's *Journal of the Air and Waste Management Association*, the report focused on the demolition of the 22-story Broadway

Homes at Broadway and Fayette Street in East Baltimore on Aug. 19, 2000. The wreckers used dynamite to collapse the building on itself, a process known as implosion.

In 1999, Baltimore chose that technique to tear down all of its high-rise public housing complexes for families. The last, Flag House Courts, was demolished in February 2001.

For the study, monitors were placed at four indoor and seven outdoor locations around the Broadway Homes site. They



Hopkins researchers studied air quality around the site of the demolished Broadway Homes.

Communicating with the Local Print Press

(How to get your stories
into the newspaper)

Deadlines

- Advance notice
- Don't wait until 5 p.m. to pitch daily story ideas
- Call back (promptly!)

Providing Information

- Don't limit access only to PR people. Make scientists available to talk, too.
- Give us the raw data, not just copies of the pre-made charts.
- To avoid mistakes, encourage reporters to call back with "late-breaking" questions (even after hours).

Helpful Hints

- Don't over-sell stories.
- Remember the competitive nature of the media.
- Don't wait for deadline stories to meet reporters. Get to know them in advance.
- Be persistent. Don't give up. Keep pitching ideas.

Contact Information

Howard Libit

Baltimore Sun

410-332-6464

410-752-6049 (fax)

howard.libit@baltsun.com