



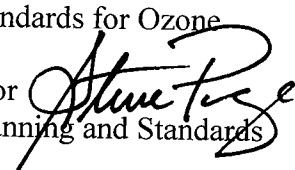
UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC 27711

MAR 12 2008

OFFICE OF
AIR QUALITY PLANNING
AND STANDARDS

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Updates to the Air Quality Index to Reflect Changes to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone

FROM: Stephen D. Page, Director 
Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards

THRU: Regional Air Division Directors – Regions I-X

TO: State and Local Air Quality Directors

Today, EPA announced revisions to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone. Those revisions include a significantly strengthened primary standard, designed to protect public health.

As part of today's final rule, EPA has adjusted the ozone Air Quality Index (AQI) to reflect the level of the revised primary standard, which is an 8-hour standard set at 0.075 ppm. AQI reporting, which is required for cities with populations of 350,000 and larger (40 CFR part 58 Appendix G), must reflect the new AQI breakpoints no later than the effective date of the rule. That date will be 60 days after the rule is published in the Federal Register.

We recognize that this effective date likely will occur well after the 2008 ozone season has begun. To help ensure that citizens across the country receive consistent AQI forecasts this year, I encourage you to use the revised index for issuing forecasts the *entire* ozone season. In most areas, the ozone season begins May 1.

The AQI provides a consistent mechanism for reporting air quality across the nation. This color-coded tool has proved both popular and effective. Since EPA finalized the AQI in 1999, the number of cities that voluntarily issue ozone forecasts has grown tremendously – from merely a handful to more than 300 cities today. Across the country, citizens are familiar with “code orange” or “code red” air quality days and

information to help them reduce their air pollution exposure is widely available. And, thanks to your work promoting ozone action days, thousands of Americans take steps each year to help reduce ozone levels in their communities.

I am attaching a fact sheet about the new ozone standards, along with a chart showing the new AQI breakpoints. If you have any questions about using the new breakpoints in your forecasts, please contact Scott Jackson at 919-541-5647. If you have any questions about AQI outreach, please contact Donna Rogers at 919-541-5478. Thank you for your efforts in supporting this important public outreach program.

Attachments (2)