



What You Can Do to Improve the Air

Can one person really make a difference in Missouri's air quality? This is a question many people have asked and the answer is a resounding "yes!" Anything a person does that reduces the amount of pollutants that are emitted into the air is a huge benefit to the environment.

Improving Missouri's Air

Here are some steps everyone can take to improve Missouri's air:

1. Decrease the use of solvents (potentially harmful chemicals found in paint thinners, glue, detergents, etc.) by using water-based paints and biodegradable cleaning products.
2. When mowing the lawn, avoid gasoline spills. It is best to mow in the evening, when heat will not evaporate fuel spills and cause pollutants to be released into the air.
3. Do not burn leaves. Compost yard clippings. Use the compost as natural fertilizer in the yard.
4. Landscape the yard with shrubs and evergreen ground covers. This reduces the amount of lawn that must be maintained which, in turn, decreases the amount of fuel that must be used to mow.
5. Carpool, walk, ride a bike and use public transportation to reduce auto emissions.
6. It is best to avoid speeding, rapid acceleration and excessive braking and idling when driving.
7. Keep car engines properly tuned and your tires inflated.
8. Use the grade of motor oil recommended by the vehicle manufacturer. This increases gas mileage significantly.
9. Shop for a vehicle that has high mileage per gallon of gas. To find a car with good gas mileage, visit www.fueleconomy.gov.
10. Do not top off the gas tank. It will emit gasoline fumes into the air.
11. Save energy by lighting the house with compact fluorescent bulbs or low-pressure sodium lights, lighting only the used area, and using natural light in the daytime.
12. When purchasing appliances, always look for the ENERGY STAR and Energy Guide labels. These labels show consumers the energy-efficiency of many household appliances. For more information, visit www.energystar.gov.
13. Always use the least amount of energy possible. Less energy equals less fuel, which means there is a smaller chance that the fuel will be released into the atmosphere. Bake at the lowest possible temperature. In the summer, set the thermostat at the highest comfortable temperature and at the lowest comfortable temperature in the winter.

14. Make sure the washing machine is full before running it. Wash on the delicate cycle and with cold water whenever possible. Air dry clothing unless drying with heat is necessary.
15. Check all appliance seals, windows, doors, foundations, and ducts for leaks or drafts. Also, make sure homes are well insulated. This will reduce the amount of energy used on heating and cooling.
16. Instead of an air conditioner, using a whole-house fan is an effective way to cool the house without wasting energy.
17. Replace furnace filters monthly or as needed.
18. In the winter months, allow sunlight to come in and during the summer, cover the windows with curtains and blinds to keep the heat outside.
19. Set the water heater on the lowest possible setting and cover it with an insulation blanket to insure that the heat does not escape.
20. Turn off all computers at night. When buying a new computer, consider a laptop, which uses much less energy than a desktop.
21. Decrease the use of herbicides and pesticides.
22. Before building a new home, read the *Great Homes Checklist / Energy-Efficient Design and Construction* (PUB1273) available on the department's publications Web page at www.dnr.mo.gov/pubs/pub1273.pdf.
23. Recycle used paper, reading materials, boxes, aluminum cans, glass containers, plastic containers and many other household items. Check with the local government to find out what items can be recycled in certain areas. Also, buy recycled products when shopping.
24. Reduce the amount of paper that is wasted by avoiding mailing lists and paying bills electronically.
25. Be imaginative and reuse as many daily materials as possible. This includes cutting down the use of disposable dishes and utensils by using washable dishware.

For more information

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