

Does Wisconsin Have an Ozone Problem?

A look at 2011-2013 ozone under the new standard

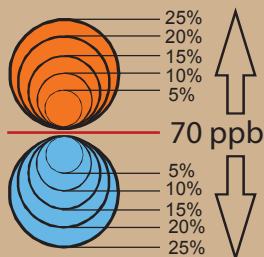
What is ozone?

Ozone is a gas that is detrimental to people's health. It causes coughing throat soreness and can worsen the symptoms of asthma, emphysema and bronchitis. Children, the elderly and people with respiratory issues can be adversely affected by ozone. Ozone is a common problem in urban areas. This is due to higher levels of nitrogen dioxide and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

How is attainment determined?

Ozone attainment is determined by taking the 4th highest ozone level each year over a three year period. Those three numbers are then averaged. If a county is over 70 ppb then it is out of attainment.

Ozone levels over and under the new standard



As of October, 2015, the attainment standard dropped from 75 ppb to 70 ppb.

The Problem with the Coast

The worst ozone areas in Wisconsin are on the coast. This is due to many factors, however one of the biggest is Lake Michigan. The lake acts as a mirror. It reflects light, increasing the amount of sunlight the pollution interacts with. This increases the amount of pollution in the lake area.