

## **An Overview of PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY " AIR QUALITY ACTION DAY POLICY"**

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"Prince George's County has 7,000 employees, one of the largest employers in the region. The Air Quality Policy recognizes this fact and attempts to reduce the County's Ozone and PM fine footprints, especially on Air Quality Action Days. The County's Air Quality policy outlines procedures and actions that are followed by several departments and agencies to alert County employees and residents of a forecasted Air Quality Action Day.

The Air Quality policy is put together and updated annually by a Multi-agency Air Quality workgroup. This workgroup is made up of representatives of the Department of Environmental Resources, Department of Health, DPW&T, Fire/EMS, MNCPPC, Office of Central services, Office of Emergency Preparedness and the Office of Public Safety Communications.

This policy is the latest addition to County Executive Jack B. Johnson's Livable Communities Initiatives. The highlights of the policy include the following

1. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments(COG) will declare and Air Quality Action Day if they determined that a multi-day episode will occur where air quality is either unhealthy for sensitive groups (Code orange), unhealthy (Code Red), or very unhealthy (Code Purple). Once declared, COG will fax an appropriate notice to the County.
2. The Office of Public Safety Communications will send the appropriate message, marked "Code Orange," "Code Red," or "Code Purple" to all fire halls and buildings.
3. The Office of Emergency Management will add the appropriate message, marked "Code Orange," "Code Red," or "Code Purple" to the County's Weatherline (snow line) and will put the same message on Channel 29B, the public safety cable station.

4. The Office of Central Services will display flags at select County office buildings and implement Episodic Bans on painting and vehicle refueling
5. The Department of Environmental Resources will send the appropriate message, marked "Code Orange," "Code Red," or "Code Purple" via e-mail to all County employees on the e-mail system.
6. The Waste Management Division, Department of Environmental Resources, will curtail landfill and pollution-causing activities at the County's landfill.
7. The Department of Public Works and Transportation, Transit Division, will notify County mass transit to initiate free bus rides on *TheBus*, Call-a-Bus and Metrobus (within Maryland). The Office of Highway Maintenance will implement an Episodic Ban on mowing and use of gas-powered lawn and garden equipment. Traffic Operations will implement an Episodic Ban on traffic-marking activities

Other County commitments to reduce pollution on a year-round basis are:

- Purchase of five percent of the County' energy needs from wind power;
- Purchase of gas/hybrid vehicles;
- Replacement of all County-owned gas containers with safety cans that meet the requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- Use of both exterior and interior paint that is either low in Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) or has no VOCs; and
- Develop of an outreach strategy to educate county employees and residents on Ozone and PM fine exposure issues.
- Develop a Lawn Mower exchange
- Telework program

If you are interested in our entire policy document, please contact Didian Tsongwain at [dvtsongwain@co.pg.md.us](mailto:dvtsongwain@co.pg.md.us) or you may contact Jeff King of COG.