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# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Northern Shenandoah Valley Enters Ozone Season** **Winchester-Frederick County residents encouraged to take simple steps to help reduce ozone-causing emissions**

Winchester, VA—Warm weather is back and so is ozone season. From May 1 through October 31, Valley AIRNow is again encouraging Winchester-Frederick County residents and businesses to take voluntary action to reduce ozone pollution in the area. These small steps will be particularly important on Air Quality Action Days—when meteorologists from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality expect weather conditions to lead to unhealthy concentrations of ground-level ozone for sensitive groups.

While ozone in the upper levels of the atmosphere serves a useful purpose by helping to reduce the effect of ultraviolet rays, ground-level ozone is a health hazard. Hot, sunny days with low winds can produce ground-level ozone concentrations in the orange range, setting in motion Air Quality Action Days. All individuals should take health precautions on these days and implement actions that reduce emissions.

Some activities that the community can do to reduce ground-level ozone on Action Days, include:

- Avoid unnecessary vehicle idling.
- Stop at the click—do not overfill gas tanks when refueling.
- Delay refueling until after 5:00 p.m.
- Delay mowing until after 5:00 p.m.
- Use public transportation or carpool, if possible.
- Combine your errands into one trip.

But Action Days aren't the only times we should practice these activities! With the recent strengthening of the federal ozone standard, it is important that the members of our community implement one or more of these actions into their daily lifestyles.

Look for daily ozone forecasts on the Valley AIRNow homepage at [www.valleyairnow.com](http://www.valleyairnow.com) or call the Air Quality Hotline at (540) 450-2207. To sign-up for the Valley AIRNow listserv and receive Action Day alerts by email, send your request to [info@valleyairnow.com](mailto:info@valleyairnow.com).

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