

Air Quality in

HOUSTON-GALVESTON-BRAZORIA

Ozone

Air quality in the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria area does not meet the federal standard for ozone pollution. The area has a federal classification of severe and must attain the national air quality standard by 2007. The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission's (TNRCC) New Source Review Permits Division and agency regulations control emissions of volatile organic

Air quality is improving. Data collected in the Houston area show that the number of days the ozone standard has been exceeded has declined over the last 10 years. The data also show a decrease in peak ozone values.

The *National Air Quality and Emissions Trends Report, 1995*, published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in October 1996, ranked Houston as having the second highest number of ozone exceedances above the standard, following Los Angeles, California.

In 1995, the TNRCC began working with area organizations concerned with air pollution by forecasting 24 hours in advance when weather conditions will be right to produce high ozone concentrations during warmer months of the year.

There are eight TNRCC ozone monitors operating in this area. In addition, the local government operates seven, and the industry-sponsored Texas City/La Marque Community Air Monitoring Network and the Houston Regional Monitoring Corporation operate eight.

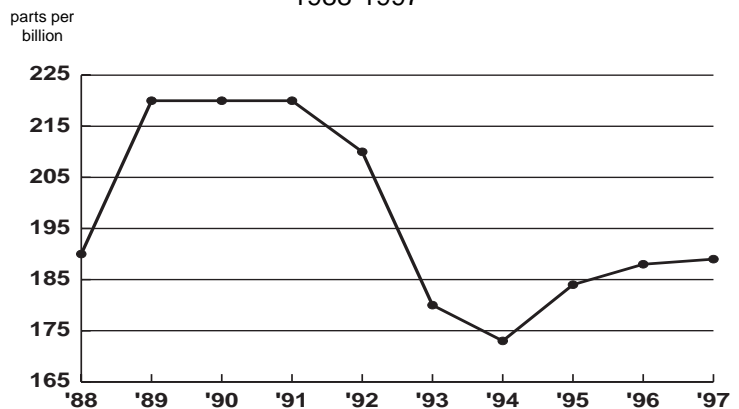
In July 1997, the EPA announced new standards for ozone and particulate matter. For the new ozone standard, the EPA will redesignate areas as attainment, nonattainment, or transitional beginning in 2000. For the new particulate matter standard, the EPA will begin redesignating areas after more data is gathered, probably in 2002.

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compounds, pollutants that contribute to ozone formation, to improve overall air quality. The 1990 Amendments to the Federal Clean Air Act require a 15 percent net reduction of these emissions from 1990 levels and that additional reasonable further progress be made toward attainment of the ozone standard.

This is a companion document to *Air Quality in Texas*, GI-185

**Houston-Galveston- Brazoria
1-Hour Ozone Design Value***
1988-1997



*EPA measure of compliance with old ozone standard of 125 parts per billion. Still applies to Beaumont-Port Arthur, Dallas-Fort Worth, El Paso, and Houston-Galveston-Brazoria.

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Sulfur Dioxide

Houston meets the national sulfur dioxide standard and TNRCC monitors have recorded no exceedances of the standard. The Houston Regional Monitoring Corporation recorded exceedances from 1985 through 1990. However, there have been none since 1990, and the EPA still considers the area in compliance with the standard. There are two TNRCC, four local government, and 10 industry-sponsored sulfur dioxide monitors in the area.

Other Air Pollutants

The Houston-Galveston-Brazoria area meets the national standards for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, respirable particulate matter, and lead.

The last time the carbon monoxide standard was ex-

ceeded was twice in 1986. The highest eight-hour concentration recorded in recent years was 80 percent of the standard. The TNRCC operates two carbon monoxide monitors in the area. In addition, there are three monitors operated by the local government and seven industry-sponsored monitors.

Because of the complexity and sensitivity of the nitrogen dioxide monitoring instruments, collecting enough data each year to provide a representative sampling set has been difficult. The results, however, show that the highest annual average nitrogen dioxide levels are about 60 percent of the national standard. There are five TNRCC, three local government, and nine industry-sponsored monitors operating.

There have been no violations of the national air quality standard for respirable particulate matter. The highest annual respirable particulate matter measurement was about 90 percent of the standard. The TNRCC operates four respirable particulate matter monitors in this area. In addition, there are six local government and three industry-sponsored monitors for this pollutant.

The TNRCC discontinued its lead monitoring in 1997. The local government operates four and local industry sponsor one lead monitor. The highest quarterly average lead level measured in 1996 by either a TNRCC or local government monitor was only 1 percent of the standard.