

**EPA'S CORE WORK
CLEAN AIR****PROTECTING AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS**

Polluted air contributes to serious health problems, including lung and heart disease, asthma attacks and other respiratory conditions, and even premature births. Through the Clean Air Act – passed by Congress in 1970 with major revisions in 1977 and 1990 – EPA develops specific programs and regulations that improve air quality and protect against exposure to radiation. The result has been dramatic reductions in air pollution, preventing hundreds of thousands of serious health problems each year. Clean air protections have reduced industrial air pollution, emissions from vehicles and engines, acid rain, and exposure to radon and radiation hazards, and tackled climate change. EPA also works to prevent pollution before it is created through pollution prevention and energy efficiency programs. Energetic enforcement assures that air quality benefits promised by the protective standards and regulations are realized.

- **Setting Air Quality Standards** – Thanks to EPA, Americans no longer live with black soot on their window sills that worked its way into their lungs and caused disease. Skies are generally blue, not gray or hidden behind a cloud of visible pollution. This is because EPA scientists and other experts review air quality monitoring data, determine whether the existing pollution is harmful and set enforceable standards for power plants, chemical factories and other industrial facilities to protect people's health.
- **Improving Air Quality from Vehicles** – The public has experienced staggering improvements in air quality, public health and fuel efficiency as a result of EPA actions. Cars and trucks are 99% cleaner, protecting people's health and saving lives. Increased fuel efficiency has saved consumers millions of dollars in fuel costs. Thanks to EPA reforms, cars routinely have catalytic converters and on-board computers, and use unleaded gasoline. Vehicles today are both cleaner and more reliable because of EPA actions and the innovative work of EPA's state-of-the-art National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory in Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- **Working toward Better Health** – We spend 90% of our time inside – at home, school and workplaces or in other buildings. Mold, radon, fragrances, chemicals in cleaning supplies, air fresheners, second-hand smoke, carpets and other consumer products affect indoor air quality and have serious effects on people's health. An estimated 24 million people, including more than six million children, have asthma and its prevalence is higher in families living on incomes below the poverty level. EPA is regarded as the national expert on the health risks associated with indoor air quality and practical approaches that eliminate, reduce or avoid those risks. The agency has been at the forefront of efforts to understand the indoor air pollutants that trigger asthma attacks and raise public awareness about how to prevent them.
- **Monitoring the Air** – EPA worked with other federal, state, tribal and local agencies to develop an outdoor air quality monitoring system, AirNow, which provides easy access to national air quality information. Americans can now track air quality in their communities and use the data shared by EPA to determine if the air is healthy enough for outdoor activities. This is particularly important for people suffering from respiratory or coronary disease and vulnerable children and seniors.