



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

PEGGY M. HATCH
SECRETARY

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Contact: Jean Kelly
Phone: 225-219-3966

DEQ EnviroFlash notification system helps citizens monitor air quality

BATON ROUGE – This year, more than ever, it is important for citizens and businesses to be aware of the air quality. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency has lowered the standards for many criteria air pollutants which makes areas that have had excellent air quality in the past much closer to being out of attainment with federal standards.

While only one area of the state, the Greater Baton Rouge Area, is currently out of attainment for the pollutant ozone, Shreveport, Lake Charles, Lafayette, New Orleans and Houma/Thibodaux are close to nonattainment. These areas have joined the EPA Ozone Advance program to take measures to reduce pollutants. An important part of the program is citizen participation.

An easy way to keep informed about air quality is through the EnviroFlash notification system. EnviroFlash is a free e-mail and text alert system that delivers air quality information straight to an inbox or phone.

To subscribe, citizens can fill in basic information such as their e-mail, ZIP code and the frequency with which they would like to receive notifications. The subscriber will then receive alerts either daily or when ozone or particle pollution is expected to be unhealthy. Another benefit to subscribing to EnviroFlash is that DEQ will send out manual emails to subscribers when there is an event, such as a fire, that affects the air quality.

“DEQ is encouraging all citizens to sign up for EnviroFlash, the free air quality notification system,” said Peggy Hatch, DEQ Secretary. “It’s a simple way to stay informed and take appropriate steps to protect your health and help the everyday citizen minimize his own pollution footprint when necessary. Everyone has a stake in the quality of our air and environment. Knowing all you can about air quality can help everyone be part of the solution to a better environment.”

To stay better informed about ozone and other air quality matters, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality encourages the general public sign up for the EnviroFlash system. These are the Web addresses to sign up statewide:

- <http://Batonrougearea.enviroflash.info>
- <http://neworleansarea.enviroflash.info>
- <http://shreveportarea.enviroflash.info>
- <http://alexandriaarea.enviroflash.info>
- <http://lakecharlesarea.enviroflash.info>
- <http://monroeara.enviroflash.info>
- <http://thibodauxarea.enviroflash.info>
- <http://lafayettearea.enviroflash.info>

Ground level ozone forms when pollutants emitted by cars, industrial sources and other sources react chemically in the presence of sunlight. During hot, sunny months, ozone becomes a greater concern. Hot, dry weather often means a higher chance of air pollution. EnviroFlash alerts can help people stay informed about air quality so they can make good decisions on outdoor activity.

For more information on current air quality, go to the DEQ Web site: www.deq.louisiana.gov/aqinfo, and the interactive EPA Web site www.airnow.gov.