

Environmental Science

Chapter 10

10.1 Air Pollution and Health

- The Clean Air Act Regulates Major Pollutants 1970
- These six are referred to as **conventional or criteria pollutants**, and they include sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, ozone (and its precursor volatile organic compounds), lead, and particulate matter.
- The EPA also monitors **unconventional pollutants**, compounds that are produced in less volume than conventional pollutants, but that are especially toxic or hazardous.
- A **point source** is a smokestack or some other concentrated pollution origin.
- **Primary pollutants** are released in a harmful form.
- **Secondary pollutants** become hazardous after reactions in the air.
- **Fugitive or nonpoint-source** emissions are those that do not go through a smokestack.
- **Sulfur dioxide (SO₂)** is a colorless, corrosive gas that damages both plants and animals.
- **Nitrogen oxides (NO_x)** are highly reactive gases formed when the heat of combustion initiates reactions between atmospheric nitrogen (N₂) and oxygen (O₂). The initial product, nitric oxide (NO), oxidizes further in the atmosphere to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), a reddish-brown gas that gives photochemical smog its distinctive color.
- **Carbon monoxide (CO)** is a colorless, odorless, but highly toxic gas produced mainly by incomplete combustion of fuel (coal, oil, charcoal, wood, or gas). CO inhibits respiration in animals by binding irreversibly to hemoglobin in blood.
- **Ozone (O₃)** ground level ozone is highly reactive oxidizing agent that damages eyes, lungs, and plant tissues, as well as paint, rubber, and plastics. It is a secondary pollutant, created by chemical reactions that are initiated by solar energy.
- Interacting with ozone to produce smog are a variety of **volatile organic compounds (VOCs)** contribute to the formation of ozone and other photochemical oxidants.
- **Lead**, our most abundantly produced metal air pollutant, impairs nerve and brain functions.
- **Particulate material** includes dust, ash, soot, lint, smoke, pollen, spores, algal cells, and many other suspended materials like aerosols.
- A special category of toxins is monitored by the U.S. EPA because they are particularly dangerous. Called **hazardous air pollutants (HAPs)**, these chemicals cause cancer, nerve damage, disrupt hormone function, and fetal development. These persistent substances remain in ecosystems for long periods of time, and accumulate in animal and human tissues.
- In 1986, Congress established the **Toxic Release Inventory (TRI)** to help inform communities about toxic substances produced and handled in their area.
- Mercury is a Key Neurotoxin

10.2 Air Pollution and the Climate

- Chemical reactions of atmospheric gases and pollution produce the phenomenon known as the **ozone hole**. Chlorine-based aerosols, such as CFC's and HCFC's, are the principal agents of ozone depletion.

Environmental Science Chapter Review

Siddappa N.Byrareddy



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