

Alert

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Alert is a monthly update on transportation and air quality planning activities in the Delaware Valley.



Air Quality Regulations

EPA Issues Notice of Violation of the Clean Air Act to Fiat Chrysler Automobiles

On January 12, 2017, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a notice of violation to Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) for alleged violations of the Clean Air Act for installing and failing to disclose engine management software in light-duty model year 2014, 2015, and 2016 Jeep Grand Cherokees and Dodge Ram 1500 trucks with 3.0 liter diesel engines sold in the United States. The undisclosed software results in increased emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from the vehicles. The allegations cover roughly 104,000 vehicles. EPA is working in coordination with the California Air Resources Board (CARB), which has also issued a notice of violation to FCA. EPA and CARB have both initiated investigations based on FCA's alleged actions.

"Failing to disclose software that affects emissions in a vehicle's engine is a serious violation of the law, which can result in harmful pollution in the air we breathe," said Cynthia Giles, Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance. "We continue to investigate the nature and impact of these devices. All automakers must play by the same rules, and we will continue to hold companies that gain an unfair and illegal competitive advantage accountable."

"Once again, a major automaker made the business decision to skirt the rules and got caught," said CARB Chair Mary D. Nichols. "CARB and U.S. EPA made a commitment to enhanced testing as the Volkswagen case developed, and this is a result of that collaboration."

The Clean Air Act requires vehicle manufacturers to demonstrate to EPA through a certification process that their products meet applicable federal emission standards to control air pollution. As part of the certification process, automakers are required to disclose and explain any software, known as auxiliary emission control devices, that can alter how a vehicle emits air pollution. FCA did not disclose the existence of certain auxiliary emission control devices to EPA in its applications for certificates of conformity for model year 2014, 2015 and 2016 Jeep Grand Cherokees and Dodge Ram 1500 trucks, despite being aware that such a disclosure was mandatory. By failing to disclose this software and then selling vehicles that contained it, FCA violated important provisions of the Clean Air Act.

FCA may be liable for civil penalties and injunctive relief for the violations



Save the Date

Thursday,
February 16, 2017

**GOPHILLYGO Multi-Modal
Happy Hour
5:30 – 7:30 pm**

Location of Meeting:

*Fergies Pub
2nd Floor
1214 Sansom Street
Philadelphia, PA*

Sunday,
April 9, 2017

**Clean Air Council 5K for
Clean Air**

*Location of Event:
Eakins Oval
Philadelphia Museum of Art*

*Register at:
<http://runforcleanair.org>*

alleged in the notice. EPA is also investigating whether the auxiliary emission control devices constitute "defeat devices," which are illegal.

In September 2015, EPA instituted an expanded testing program to screen for defeat devices on light duty vehicles. This testing revealed that the FCA vehicle models in question produce increased NO_x emissions under conditions that would be encountered in normal operation and use. As part of the investigation, EPA has found at least eight undisclosed pieces of software that can alter how a vehicle emits air pollution.

For more information on this EPA Action, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/fca>.



Air Quality and Health

Children in China Face Dual Threat of Air Pollution and Obesity

Children and adolescents in mainland China are facing two serious and conflicting public health threats: ongoing exposure to air pollution and an increasingly sedentary lifestyle with little regular physical activity outside of school.

A recent article in the *Journal of Pediatrics* suggests that health workers and policymakers need to find ways to address both of these issues so that children can be more physically active without suffering the health risks caused by exposure to air pollution.

Many cities and countries around the world grapple with air pollution issues, but there is particular concern for children growing up in China, in part, because they tend to commute more on foot or bike, and their playgrounds and sports fields are often found near busy streets or highways. At the same time, very few Chinese children today are participating in moderate or vigorous physical activity outside of school, and the number of overweight and obese children in China has more than doubled in the last 25 years.

Children are particularly susceptible to adverse health impacts from both short- and long-term exposure to air pollution, in part, because they have higher rates of respiration and tend to take shallower breaths. Air pollution has been associated with increases in asthma, chronic cough, and other respiratory problems in children that are likely to be exacerbated by heavy breathing from vigorous exercise.

The authors of the study recommend four steps for public health officials:

- Increase awareness among parents, children, health workers, educators, and policymakers on the causes and impacts of air pollution on children and adolescents, as well as the potential harm when coupled with outdoor physical activity;
- Add air quality systems at school sites, so pollution can be measured when and where children are engaging in physical activity;
- Adjust the intensity of outdoor physical activity during the school day on the basis of air pollution monitoring results; and
- Educate children about exercising in polluted environments, including instruction to stop activity when they notice problems such as coughing, chest tightness, or wheezing.

"Doing some kind of physical activity, even if it is not as vigorous, is still better than having no physical activity for the children," according to the lead author Brad Cardinal of Oregon State University.

A number of these steps are already being promoted in the United States by the Centers for Disease Control and the EPA. Even though air pollution in the United States is not nearly as severe as in China, the important message of the article is that physical activity remains important even when air quality is unhealthy.

For more information on the article "*Air pollution and lack of physical activity pose competing threats to children in China.*" please visit: www.oregonstate.edu



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