



Six Common Air Pollutants

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Chief Causes for Concern

SO₂ contributes to respiratory illness, particularly in children and the elderly, and aggravates existing heart and lung diseases.

SO₂ contributes to the formation of acid rain, which:

- damages trees, crops, historic buildings, and monuments; and
- makes soils, lakes, and streams acidic.

SO₂ contributes to the formation of atmospheric particles that cause visibility impairment, most noticeably in national parks.

SO₂ can be transported over long distances.

SO₂ and the pollutants formed from SO₂, such as sulfate particles, can be transported over long distances and deposited far from the point of origin. This means that problems with SO₂ are not confined to areas where it is emitted.

Short-term Peak Levels

High levels of SO₂ emitted over a short period, such as a day, can be particularly problematic for people with asthma. EPA encourages communities to learn about the types of industries in their communities and to work with local industrial facilities to address pollution control equipment failures or process upsets that could result in peak levels of SO₂.

Sulfur Dioxide

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