



Division 08

Health and Safety

Chapter 12 – Outdoor Activities During Air Quality Alerts and Inclement Weather Conditions

January 2009

POLICY

This General Order shall provide guidelines and operating procedures for all personnel concerning the cancellation of outdoor activities during air quality alerts (Ozone Action Days) and/or inclement weather conditions. Every attempt should be made to follow these guidelines whenever possible. These guidelines do not preclude the performance of essential emergency and non-emergency functions regardless of prevailing weather conditions.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

PROCEDURES

1. Notification

Information concerning the status of air quality and weather forecasting is provided on a continuous basis to Public Safety Communications from sources, such as; the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), the National Weather Service and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).

Upon receipt of information that an air quality alert and/or inclement weather condition exists, Public Safety Communications will make an all channel announcement notifying fire and emergency medical service personnel of the areas affected and the approximate duration. Recommended actions and other pertinent

information concerning the dangers associated with poor air quality and/or deteriorating weather conditions would be included in the message.

Guidelines

Guidelines are hereby established concerning the curtailment of outdoor activities during air quality alerts and inclement weather. The final determination to continue outdoor activities will be left to the discretion of the Battalion Chiefs using the following criteria:

- Factors to be used to determine outdoor activities during an air quality alert as prescribed by the Metropolitan Washington COG Air Quality Forecast and Action Guide:
 - **Code Red- Unhealthy Air Quality (100+ range)**

All non-emergency outdoor activities should be limited to essential functions, drills to be held indoors, limit refueling of vehicles, combine errands, no unnecessary idling of vehicles

Ozone Alert Action Flags will be raised as a warning to the public of possible health hazards. These flags will be flown at designated County Government office buildings, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission facilities, and fire stations throughout the County.



➤ **Code Orange- Moderately Unhealthy Air Quality (85-99 range)**

Limit prolonged outside activities to a minimum

Ozone Alert Action Flags will be raised as a warning to the public of possible health hazards. These flags will be flown at designated County Government office buildings, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission facilities, and fire stations throughout the County.

➤ **Code Yellow- Moderate Air Quality (51-84 range)**

Normal Department outdoor activities permitted.

➤ **Code Green- Good Air Quality (0-50 range)**

Normal Department outdoor activities permitted.

- Severe cold (temperature 32 degrees and below)

When any of the above weather conditions exists, the final determination to continue outdoor activities will be left to the discretion of the Battalion Chiefs.

Indoor Activities and Drills

Nothing in this General Order shall cancel indoor activities or training drills.

Weather Related Disasters

Weather related disasters will continue to be handled according to General Orders as set by this Department.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

N/A

Factors to be used to determine the cancellation of outdoor activities during inclement weather conditions as forecasted by the National Weather Service:

- Rain (moderate to heavy)
- Flooding conditions
- Severe thunderstorms and lightening
- Sleet or hail
- Snow accumulating or considerable amount is still on the ground
- Tornado or hurricane (watch or warning)
- Heat (temperature 95 degrees and above)