



What you need to know about...

Diesel Pollution



What is Diesel Pollution?

When diesel engines burn fuel, they leave behind a dangerous stew of emissions. Because diesel vehicles and equipment often operate on the street level, this pollution is emitted exactly where people breathe.

The exhaust from diesel vehicles and equipment contains over 40 toxic air contaminants, carcinogens, ozone smog-forming compounds, and fine particulate matter, often called "soot".

Soot pollution is especially dangerous, and diesel engines emit more than 75% of the fine particles from all vehicles.

Diesel exhaust is one of the most dangerous pollutants: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that the lung cancer risk from diesel exhaust exposure is 8 times higher than the cancer risk from all other air toxins combined.

How Does it Affect our Health?

In Metropolitan Chicago alone, diesel soot pollution causes, on average, 755 deaths, 1,021 heart attacks, 476 cases of chronic bronchitis, and 17,077 asthma attacks every year.

Exposure to diesel pollution is also known to increase the risk of lung cancer and stroke.

Because of their small size (less than 1/30 the width of a single human hair), fine particles evade the body's natural defenses, such as coughing and sneezing, and penetrate deep into the lungs where they enter the bloodstream.

Diesel pollution is a major public health problem, killing more people each year than drunk drivers, or AIDS, or firearms.



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