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Air quality may move into the moderate category

Lane County residents may see air quality move into the moderate category this afternoon as very high temperatures combined with light winds may cause pollution levels to rise in the Willamette Valley. Yesterday, ozone levels rose to the moderate category on the air quality index and may continue to rise as hot, stagnant weather conditions continue. Individuals who are sensitive to air pollution may be impacted. “When temperatures rise and air quality reaches the moderate level, sensitive individuals should avoid strenuous exercise during the heat of the day,” said Sally Markos, LRAPA spokesperson. Moderating activity is most important for people with asthma, heart, or respiratory problems. Small children and the elderly are most vulnerable.

Ozone is not directly emitted as a pollutant, but forms in the presence of hot temperatures, sunshine, and mild breezes. Residents are encouraged to avoid behaviors that contribute to high ozone levels, such as excessive driving, using gas-powered lawn equipment during the heat of the day, and using paints and solvents. Refueling your car in the cooler evening hours rather than late morning or afternoon will also help reduce fumes that contribute to the formation of ozone. Residents are encouraged to use alternative forms of transportation to reduce vehicle emissions. If you have to drive, combine errands into one trip to reduce miles traveled and turn off your vehicle at drive-up windows to avoid engine idling. And, wait until a cooler day to mow your lawn.

The public can track hourly ozone levels by checking the air quality index at www.LRAPA.org. For more tips about ways to help, visit http://www.lrapa.org/public_education/air_action_day_program.php/

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