



New York State  
**DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSERVATION**



## Vehicles Pollute

In many urban areas, motor vehicles are the single largest contributor to ground-

level ozone, a major component of smog. Ozone causes crucial public health problems such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and can bring on permanent lung damage. Cars also emit several pollutants classified as air toxics, which also damage your health.

*Vehicles generate three major pollutants: hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, and carbon monoxide.*

Hydrocarbons react with nitrogen oxides in sunlight and warm weather to form ground-level ozone. Nitrogen oxides help form acid rain. Carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, deadly gas can impair mental functions and visual perception, as well as kill.

For more information, please see our website

**[www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)**

### **Pollutants are released when...**

Fuel is burned in the internal combustion engine and the air/gasoline residuals are emitted through the tailpipe.

Heat causes fuel to evaporate from under the hood and throughout the fuel system. Hot, sunny days and engines warmed by running provide heat to vaporize fuel into the air.

Refueling at the service station where gasoline vapors escape into the air.

### **Motorists can help reduce the amount of pollutants released by...**

Improving driving habits: combine trips, travel at moderate speeds, don't top off gasoline tanks when refueling, carpool, avoid idling, use public transportation.

Keeping vehicles in good running order: follow manufacturer's instructions on routine maintenance, have wheels aligned, check for correct tire pressure.

Buying less polluting cars.

### **New York State's program for reducing air pollution from vehicles includes...**

The sale of fuels that burn cleaner: low sulfur diesel fuel, reformulated gasoline (RFG, used in the NY Metropolitan Area), and less volatile fuels (used seasonally in the warmer months).

At gasoline pumps: using special nozzles that recover vapors before they can be released into the air.

The enhanced inspection and maintenance program (I/M) for the NY Metropolitan area: vehicles, in the downstate area with the most severe air pollution, will undergo more comprehensive emissions testing. For the upstate area, pollution control components will be checked during regular safety inspections.