



# “Mow Down Pollution” Fact Sheet

**Did you know that operating a pre-1997 gas-powered lawnmower for an hour pollutes as much as driving a car from Denver to Fort Collins?**

Before the introduction of catalytic converters to lawnmowers in 1997, a gas-powered lawnmower running for one hour polluted as much as a car driving nearly 65 miles. Since 1997, Federal regulations have required all manufacturers to equip catalytic converters to all lawnmowers. A catalytic converter helps turn harmful pollutants – such as carbon monoxide (CO) and hydrocarbons (HC) – into less harmful emissions, making them safer for the environment and for public health.

## Summer Ozone Facts

- ▶ ground-level ozone forms when volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) combine in the presence of sunlight
- ▶ summer ozone pollution can cause breathing problems and respiratory infections in the elderly, the young, and those with pre-existing ailments; even healthy people who exercise or work outdoors can experience breathing problems when exposed to ozone
- ▶ emissions from local industry, cars, and lawnmowers contribute to summer ozone formation
- ▶ gas-powered lawn and garden equipment – such as lawnmowers, weed trimmers, and leaf blowers – cause 10 percent of the summertime ozone in the metro Denver region

## Lawnmower Maintenance Tips to Reduce Summer Ozone

- ▶ retire your gas-powered lawn equipment – electric-powered, cordless, and push mowers do not pollute the air and are safe for public health
- ▶ mow in the evening – this reduces ozone formation because the sunlight and heat is not as intense so evaporative emissions do not have a chance to “cook” through the heat of the day
- ▶ use a funnel to refill your tank – this minimizes spills and the release of evaporative emissions
- ▶ screw the gas cap back on the mower tightly – this also minimizes the release of evaporative emissions
- ▶ change the oil in your lawnmower after every 25 hours of use
- ▶ replace the air filter every three months
- ▶ sharpen mower blades regularly – this will allow for a cleaner cut that uses less fuel

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