



Visual Air Pollution

Air Pollution Control Program fact sheet

11/2006

Introduction

Is it possible to see air pollution with the naked eye? Many people assume that pollution is an invisible enemy, but those people would be surprised to find how visible pollution can be in the air. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources has come up with a very unique way to give people a new perspective on air pollution.

Visual Air Pollution Cameras

The department has air pollution cameras in St. Louis and Kansas City that have an interesting purpose. The ArchCam is located on the roof of the Teamsters Local Union No. 682 office building in St. Louis and the KCCam is on the Blue Ridge Mall office tower. Each camera has its own Web site that allows visitors to view several pictures of the St. Louis and Kansas City skylines. To view the ArchCam, visit www.dnr.mo.gov/env/esp/aqm/archcam.htm and to view the KCCam, visit www.dnr.mo.gov/env/esp/aqm/kccam.htm. These sites show pictures of a poor visibility day, a good visibility day, the current photo (updated every 15 minutes) and a video of the previous day's pictures. The photographs will allow you to see the effects of air pollution on visibility with your own eyes. Although not all air contaminants are visible, these pictures can give you an idea of how the air you breathe can be unhealthy.

What Causes Reduced Visibility?

The main component to reduced visibility is smog. Smog is a reddish-gray fog that occurs when sunlight is mixed with nitrogen dioxide, hydrocarbons and other air contaminants. These pollutants come from anything that burns fossil fuels, such as automobiles, heating and cooling systems and factories. Not only does smog diminish visibility, but it also produces ozone.

Ozone is a chemical that can be a health hazard, especially to children and the elderly. High concentrations of ozone may cause breathing difficulties, an increased risk of bronchitis and aggravated cases of asthma. All of this is caused by air pollution. To actually see what you are breathing, check out the Web sites, then visit www.dnr.mo.gov to find out how you can help clear the air.

For more information

Contact us for more information about the St. Louis and Kansas City air pollution cameras:

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