

**Source: NC Air Awareness**

On March 12, 2008, EPA signed the most stringent 8-hour standard ever for ground-level ozone, revising the standards for the first time in more than a decade. The new primary 8-hour standard for ozone is **0.075 parts per million** (ppm) lowered from the previous standard set at 0.08 ppm in 1997. The EPA based the changes on the most recent scientific evidence about the health effects of ozone.

**Will things change this summer?**

The NC Division of Air Quality will be issuing air quality forecasts based on the new more stringent ozone standard. For this reason, **individuals may notice an increase in the frequency or severity of forecasted Air Quality Action Days in the region.** The table below compares the number of exceedance days in 2007 under to the .08 ppm standard vs. the number of exceedance days if the standard had been .075 ppm.

	Old standard (.08 ppm)	New standard (.075 ppm)
Orange	24	50
Red	1	5
Purple	1	1
Total	26	56

NCDAQ may also begin issuing ozone forecasts in mid-April, rather than the traditional May 1 start of ozone season. This “lengthening” of ozone season may continue in coming years.

**What happens next?**

The following schedule will apply to implementing the revised ozone standards:

- March 2009 - States must make non-attainment recommendations to EPA.
- March 2010 - EPA will issue final designations of attainment and non-attainment areas.
- March 2013 - States must submit State Implementation Plans (SIP) outlining how they will reduce pollution to meet the standards.
- 2013 – 2030 – Deadlines for state compliance with the new standard may vary based on the severity of the problem each the area.