

AIR POLLUTION THEME OF THE MONTH: AIR QUALITY IN WINTER MONTHS



In this issue:

- > Air pollution during winter: better or worse?
- > Habits contributing to air pollution in winter months
- > How can air quality be improved during winter?
- > Latest update on the Faith Centre Air Quality project

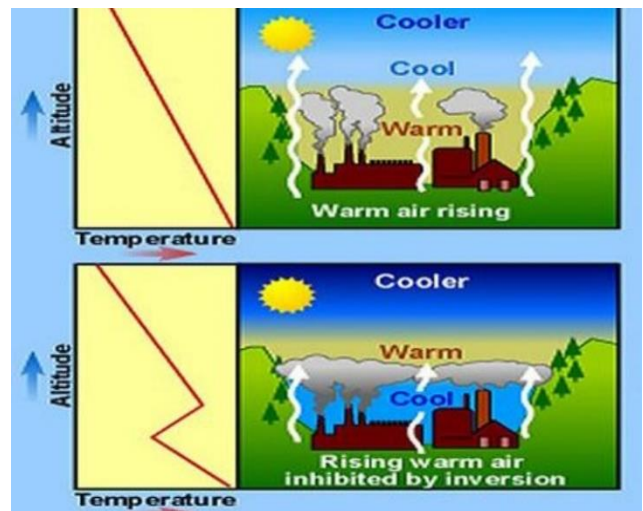
Air pollution during winter: better or worse?



Winter months are often when air pollution is at its highest. This is because cold air is denser, and a cap can form in the cold air. In this dense cooler air, pollutants can't escape as easily and can't move about as much. This is like a kind of blanket that covers the ground in the winter and traps pollutants, like smog and ozone. Because of its density,

pollutants accumulate, and wind can't whisk it away quickly. Wintertime air pollution is breathed in at a higher rate than summertime air pollution since it is present for a much longer period.

Indoor air quality, just as outdoor air quality also tends to get worse during the winter months. Even though air pollution is a serious health hazard that everyone should be aware of all year-round, it's crucial to understand how and why winter can put you at greater risk.



Habits contributing to air pollution during winter months

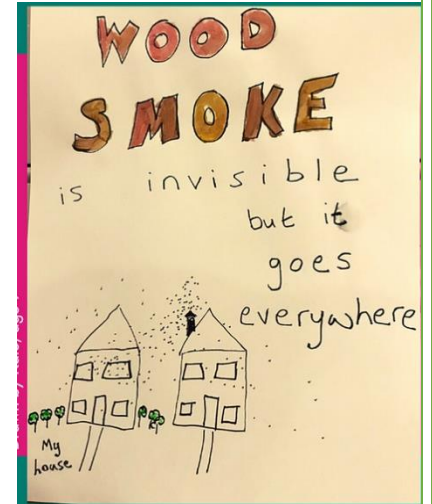
The way we behave during winter is another factor that contributes to winter air being more polluted. These behaviours include:

- It is very common for people to leave their cars running longer in winter than they do in the summer. This is either to defrost an automobile or to wait for the heater to start up. With modern engines this is not necessary, so wastes fuel and money, and also produces a lot of pollution.
- There is an increase in energy consumption during the winter due to more electricity and gas being utilised for heating. This causes pollution due to fossil fuel combustion.
- Use of wood-burning stoves to heat the home which can triple the amount of particulate matter pollution in our homes, also releasing smoke into the atmosphere.
- Staying home for longer period can impact indoor air quality negatively because more pollution is accumulated.
- Reduced ventilation as a result of closed windows in an effort to conserve heat, thereby making pollution levels more concentrated.
- Frequent use of cars to places you would usually walk to.



How can outdoor and indoor air quality be improved during winter months?

The same change of behaviour needed to mitigate air pollution all-year round, remains the same for wintertime (where these habits seem to be worse). There are several easy ways to lessen wintertime air pollution and make it less dangerous. You can avoid using wood as a heat source and avoid letting your automobile idle for an extended period of time in addition to trying your best to preserve energy whenever possible. Additionally, by maintaining proper ventilation and occasionally opening windows, you can enhance the quality of the air within your home.



Latest update on faith centre air quality project

We have just finished working with the following 8 faith centres for the first year. Thank you all to your amazing work:

- Parish Church of St Francis Assisi, Wednesbury
- Hindu Temple / Shree Pashupatinath Mandir (Shani Dham), Rowley Regis
- Yemeni Community Association in Sandwell, West Bromwich
- Guru Nanak Gurdwara Smethwick, Smethwick
- Shri Venkateswara (Balaji) Temple, Oldbury
- Smethwick Jamia Masjid, Smethwick
- The Wesley Centre for All, Wednesbury
- St Matthews, Tipton

And for the second year, we currently have the following seven centres:

- The Salvation Army, Cradley Heath
- Centre for Oneness, Wednesbury
- Holy Trinity Church, Smethwick
- Oldbury Mosque, Smethwick
- Community Link, Cradley Heath
- Guru Har Rai Gurdwara Sahib, West Bromwich
- Shah Jalal Mosque, Tipton

We are currently seeking one centre in Oldbury to work with us. So, if you're the leader of any faith centre in this town and are interested in working with us, please contact us at pollution_control@sandwell.gov.uk.