



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY - REGION 9

**FACT SHEET**

**DETERMINATION OF ATTAINMENT OF THE  
CARBON MONOXIDE STANDARD FOR  
THE LAS VEGAS METROPOLITAN  
NONATTAINMENT AREA**

May 2005

**Today's Announcement**

- EPA is today announcing that it is making a finding that the Las Vegas Valley nonattainment area within Clark County, Nevada has attained the Carbon Monoxide National Ambient Air Quality Standard by the applicable attainment date (2000) and has continued to attain the standard since that time. Based on this final notice of attainment, EPA is finding that the contingency measures requirement under the Clean Air Act no longer applies to the area.

**Background**

- There are two federal ambient health-based standards for CO: an 8-hour standard of 9 ppm and a 1-hour standard of 35 ppm. Las Vegas Valley is currently classified as a serious nonattainment area based on monitored violations of the 8-hour CO standard. The area has not exceeded the 1-hour CO standard of 35 ppm since the 1970's. The 8-hour standard has not been violated since 1998. The Las Vegas area's deadline for attaining the CO standard was December 31, 2000.
- By means of notice-and-comment rulemaking, EPA issues attainment findings when appropriate. These findings are based on a review of the air quality data and a verification that the monitoring network is adequate.

## **Las Vegas Air Quality**

- There are presently no monitored exceedances of the CO health-based standard, which is 9 ppm averaged over 8 hours. Las Vegas Valley has experienced no exceedances from 1999 to the present. The number of exceedances of the CO NAAQS has decreased from over 40 per year in the 1980's to less than 3 per year in late 1990's. The severity of violations has also decreased, from a high value of 21 ppm in 1981 to a high value of 7.3 ppm in 2000. The last exceedances of the 8-hour CO NAAQS, 10.3 ppm and 10.1 ppm, occurred in 1998 at the Sunrise Avenue site in Las Vegas.
- The improved air quality is the direct result of Nevada's implementation of controls to reduce CO levels, as well as tighter federal motor vehicle emission standards. The key controls adopted by Nevada to improve air quality in the Las Vegas area include cleaner burning gasoline regulations, an enhanced vehicle inspection and maintenance program, an alternative fuel vehicle program, and voluntary rideshare programs. Numerous pollution reduction measures are also in place for industrial and commercial sources. Nevada will need to continue to implement these controls in order to maintain clean air.

## **Impact of CO on Public Health**

- CO is a pollutant generated primarily by mobile sources, cars and trucks. Major sources of combustion, like power plants, can also generate CO. CO affects people's health by entering the bloodstream and reducing oxygen delivery to the body's organs and tissues. Exposure to elevated levels of CO may cause loss of visual perception and manual dexterity, as well as fatigue, chest pains, and breathing difficulties. Extreme exposures can cause loss of consciousness and even death.
- Young children, senior citizens, pregnant women and people with asthma or heart and lung problems are especially susceptible to the effects of CO pollution.

## **What Happens Next?**

- While meeting the CO standard is a notable achievement and illustrates that Clark County has made progress toward cleaning up the air, there is still more work to be done. The state and local air quality agencies must ensure that the area continues to meet the CO standard.
- A finding of attainment does not redesignate the area to attainment. Before an area can be redesignated, the State must submit and EPA must approve a maintenance plan showing

among other things, that the area will continue to maintain the standard for a 10-year period.

### **Additional Information**

- A copy of the proposed attainment finding is available in the Air Programs section of the EPA Region IX's website: [www.epa.gov/region09/air/vegasco/](http://www.epa.gov/region09/air/vegasco/)
- EPA will soon publish it's final finding of attainment in the Federal Register.
- For more information, please call Amy Zimpfer, Associate Director, Air Division, U.S. EPA Region 9 at (415) 947-4146 or Karina O'Connor, Air Quality Planner, Air Division, U.S. EPA Region 9 at (775) 833-1276. Correspondence sent by U.S. mail should be addressed to:

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