

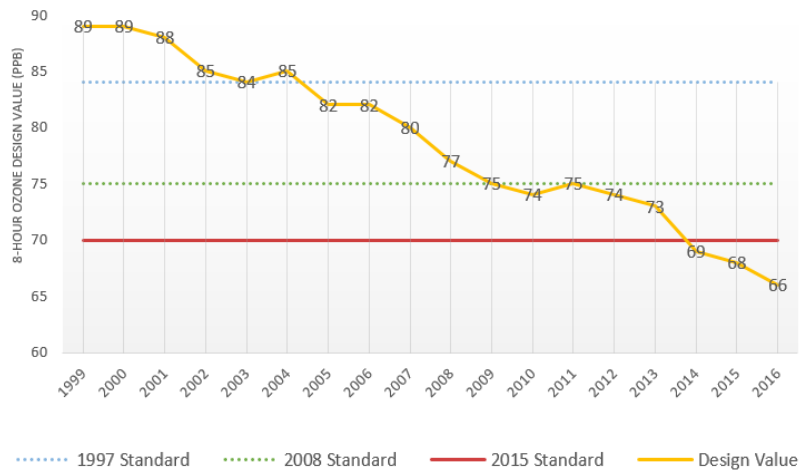
No Images? [Click here](#)**AIR CENTRAL TEXAS**

## **Air Central Texas News and Updates**

### **Be Air Aware - The State of Ground-Level Ozone**

With 2016 now behind us, Air Central Texas is taking a look at the state of ground-level ozone pollution in the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and comparing our air quality with other regions in the state. Ground-level ozone harms the health of humans, wildlife, and vegetation, for this reason, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets requirements on how much ozone is allowed to be in the air. In 2015, the EPA reviewed the ground-level ozone standards and lowered the acceptable level to 70 parts per billion (ppb) from 75 ppb. To determine if an area is meeting this standard, the EPA uses a static value called a design value ([learn more](#)) and as of the end of 2016 the Austin-Round Rock MSA had a design value of 66, meeting the new ground-level ozone standard, however, the EPA is expected to make its compliance determinations in late 2017 to early 2018.

#### **Figure 1 - Austin-Round Rock MSA Ozone Design Value Trend**

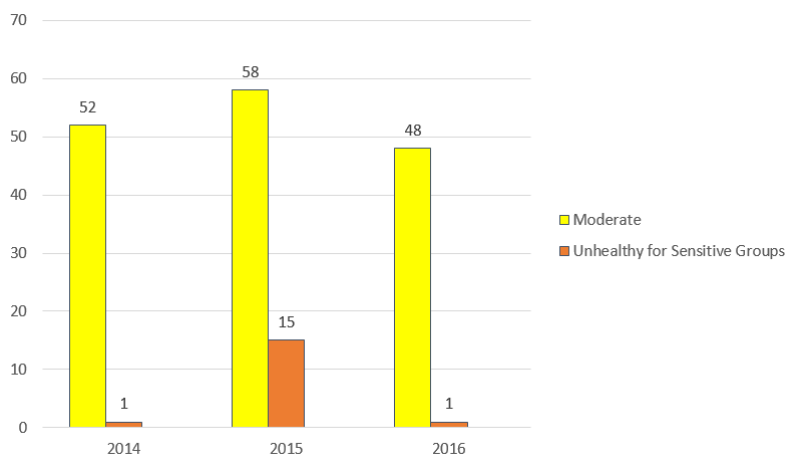


As Figure 1 shows, the Austin-Round Rock MSA has steadily lowered its design value over the years. The people and organizations in the Austin-Round Rock region have been working together on reducing emissions since 2002 when the region was above the 1997 ozone standard, and since then, the region has been successful in lowering ozone concentrations. Visit the [CAPCOG Air Quality Program website](#) for more information about the current and prior regional ozone plans. Air Central Texas will continue to work to see that this trend continues.

Region	Design Value
Dallas-Fort Worth	80
Tyler-Longview-Marshall	66
El Paso	71
Waco	63
Killeen-Temple	67
Beaumont-Port Arthur	68
Austin-Round Rock	66
Houston-Galveston-Brazoria	79
San Antonio	73
Corpus Christi	65

The table to the left shows a comparison of the 2016 ozone design values across the state of Texas. Four regions across the state were unable to meet the 70 ppb ground-level ozone standard; however, the EPA will take many factors into account before making their final compliance rulings; visit the [EPA website](#) for more information.

**Figure 2 - Number of Days with Moderate or Worse Ground-Level Ozone Concentrations in the CAPCOG Region**

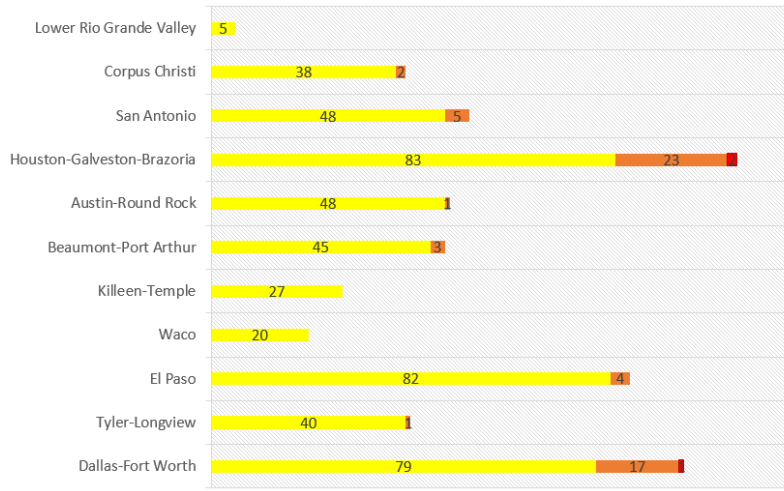


Note - Ozone monitors in the CAPCOG region are located in Bastrop, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties.

Figure 2 compares ozone levels in the CAPCOG region during the past three years; 2016 had the least number of days with 'moderate' or worse ground-level ozone levels. The CAPCOG region had 49 days where ground-level ozone levels were considered 'moderate' or worse, with one of those days reaching a level that was unhealthy for sensitive groups - children, older adults, and people with a respiratory illness. This represents an improvement over 2015 ozone levels in the area where there were 73 days in which ozone levels were considered 'moderate' or worse and 15 of those days were considered 'unhealthy for sensitive groups'.

In comparison with the rest of the state (Figure 3), the Austin area had the fifth highest number of 'moderate' or worse ground-level ozone concentrations in 2016; however, the region was tied to the Tyler-Longview region with the fourth fewest number of days with ground-level ozone levels that were 'unhealthy for sensitive groups' behind the Waco, Killeen-Temple, Lower Rio Grande Valley, and Laredo areas.

**Figure 3 - Number of Days with Moderate or Worse Ground-Level Ozone Concentrations in 2016 across Texas**



■ Moderate   
 ■ Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups   
 ■ Unhealthy

Note - Areas boundaries are defined by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, data and monitor locations are viewable on their [website](#).

Note - The Laredo area had 0 days when ozone levels were moderate or worse.

Note - Not all areas of the state are monitored for ozone pollution.

## How Do You Take Care of Texas? Elementary School Art Contest



**TakeCareOfTexas.org**

The [Take Care of Texas Campaign](#) is giving sixteen students—and one teacher—a chance to win a Samsung tablet or laptop by entering the 3rd annual *How Do You Take Care of Texas?* Entries should show positive ways to keep the air and water clean, save water and energy, and reduce waste. Air Central Texas suggests you show how you take care of air quality in Central Texas by including our Be Air Aware slogan.

Entries must be postmarked on or before **March 3, 2017**.

Winners will be announced April 3, 2017.

[Learn More](#)



## Volkswagen Diesel Vehicle Settlement

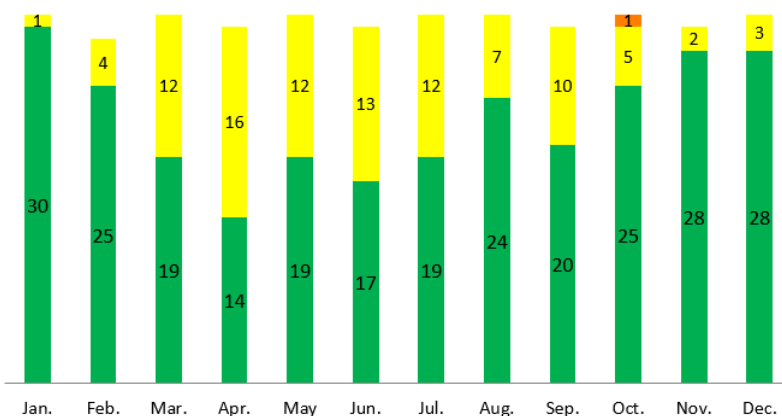
The EPA issued a Notice of Violation to Volkswagen, which alleged that Volkswagen installed software in its model year 2009-2015 2.0 liter diesel cars that circumvents EPA emissions standards. These vehicles emit up to 40 times more pollution than emissions standards allow. [Read more about the Volkswagen Violations...](#)

On October 25, 2016, a settlement was approved in U.S. Federal Court which includes Volkswagen buying back nearly 475,000 affected vehicles, creation of a \$2.7 billion mitigation trust fund to implement vehicle replacement/repower projects - \$192 million will be available for the State of Texas, and the creation of a \$2 billion fund to support zero-emissions vehicles.

[Learn More](#)

## 2016 Austin-Round Rock MSA Daily Air Quality Index Levels

■ Good   
 ■ Moderate   
 ■ Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups



In December, there were three days where air quality was 'moderate' and all three of those days were 'moderate' due to Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM 2.5) pollution. At the end of 2016, there were 98 days where air quality was 'moderate' or worse:

- 45 of those days were 'moderate' for ozone levels.
- 61 days were 'moderate' for PM 2.5 levels.
- 9 days were 'moderate' for both ozone and PM 2.5 levels.
- 1 day was 'moderate' for 'moderate for NO2 levels.
- 1 days was 'moderate' for both ozone and NO2 levels.
- 1 day was 'unhealthy for sensitive groups' due to ozone levels.

To learn more about the Air Quality Forecasting visit [Airnow.gov](http://Airnow.gov).

*Be Air Aware*



Air Central Texas presented by the Capital Area Council of Governments

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