



October 1st, 2021

Dear Municipal Manager or Elected Official:

In September 2021, County Council passed, and the County Executive signed, an important addition to the Allegheny County Health Department Rules and Regulations, Article XXI, Air Pollution Control. The new sections of the regulation, named the Mon Valley Air Pollution Episode Rule, were added to respond to episodes that occur in the Mon Valley: weather-related inversions that result in high levels of small particulate matter pollution (PM_{2.5} pollution - particles measuring 2.5 micro-meters or less).

During these episodes, PM_{2.5} pollution gets trapped close to the ground. High levels of PM_{2.5} pollution in the air are associated with an increased risk for emergency room visits and hospitalizations for people with heart and lung diseases, children, the elderly, and other sensitive residents. Below are explanations of the new regulation sections and a link to the full rule.

First, the new regulation defines a Mon Valley Air Pollution Episode and the conditions that cause it.

Second, the regulation outlines the episode stages, a Watch or a Warning. A Watch occurs when the Air Quality Program predicts that PM_{2.5} pollution levels will be exceeded in at least one of the municipalities listed in the rule in the upcoming 24-hours. A Warning occurs if an official monitoring station in the Mon Valley reads PM_{2.5} pollution levels that are higher than national standards allow and the weather conditions influencing the condition are unlikely to change soon.



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Third, the rule describes the actions to be taken by public and private parties to decrease the impact of pollution during an episode Watch or Warning. The first change applies to permitted facilities that release pollution in the Mon Valley, not necessarily in your municipality. These facilities must submit an air pollution mitigation plan for the Health Department to review and approve.

The second change bans open burning during an episode Watch or Warning. This new regulation applies to your municipality because it is in or near the Mon Valley. Any local government unit with authority over the area where the burning is taking place should enforce this rule.

For your convenience, the full regulation is shown at the page linked here:

AlleghenyCounty.us/regs-sips/

If you have any questions, please contact Tom Lattner, Air Quality Engineer, at 412-578-7986.

Thank you for your time and cooperation,

Sincerely,

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Air Quality Program Manager

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