



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Georgia's Clean Air Force Stresses the Importance of Clean Air for Healthy Lung Month**

**ATLANTA** (October 9, 2017) – October is Healthy Lung Month, dedicated to lung health awareness - and a good time to consider the importance of clean air. [Georgia's Clean Air Force](#), a partnership with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), wants to remind Georgians of the negative health effects from air pollution.

Nearly 40 percent of Americans live where the air is unhealthy to breathe, according to the American Lung Association's 2017 State of the Air report. In addition, approximately 25 million people live with asthma, including 18.4 million adults and 6.2 million children 18 and younger.

Studies show that air pollution can have serious health risks, including respiratory irritation, accelerated aging of the lungs, loss of lung capacity, and diseases such as asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema. People at risk from inhaling ozone are children, teens, seniors age 65 and older, people who work outdoors, and people with heart and lung diseases including asthma.

Since 1996, Georgia's vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Program, also known as Georgia's Clean Air Force, has helped to identify and repair more than 3.2 million heavy-polluting vehicles. GCAF helped prevent more than 1.6 million tons of harmful ozone-forming pollutants from entering the air we breathe, the equivalent of removing 13,400 vehicles from the road, or planting more than 400 million trees.

"It's always a good idea to practice smart driving techniques and regular car maintenance, both of which can help cut down on harmful pollutants entering the air," said Pamela T. Earl, Program Manager, Mobile & Area Sources, EPD.

To do your part, consider these four steps to limit emission pollutants while driving.

- Carpool to work, and set up a carpool for school drop offs and pickups. Not only will this help reduce pollutants from entering the air, but it will also save time and money.
- Avoid aggressive driving, which, in addition to being extremely unsafe, can increase fuel consumption and exhaust emissions.
- Don't idle your engine. If your car will be idling for more than 30 seconds, turn your engine off; example: if you are picking a child up at school or waiting for a passenger.
- Keeping your vehicle properly maintained will also help keep vehicle emissions in check. In addition, proper maintenance will help your car pass the annual emissions test with flying colors and prevent bigger issues down the road.

For additional information, visit the Georgia's Clean Air Force website at <http://www.cleanairforce.com>.

### **About Georgia's Clean Air Force**

Georgia's Clean Air Force (GCAF), in partnership with the Environmental Protection Division (EPD), is responsible for the management of the Enhanced Vehicle Emission Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) Program throughout Atlanta's 13 metro counties. Since 1996, Georgia's Inspection and Maintenance Program has prevented more than 1.6 million tons of harmful ozone-forming pollutants from entering the air we breathe, the equivalent of removing 13,400 vehicles from the road, or planting more than 400 million trees. It is also estimated that Georgia residents have saved \$311 million in utility bills since 1996 due to cleaner air. The program has also identified and repaired more than 3.2 million heavy-polluting vehicles. For more information, please visit [www.cleanairforce.com](http://www.cleanairforce.com).

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