



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: Kevin Chambers
Director of Communications
Georgia Environmental Protection Division
(404) 651-7970

Expert Tips to Breathe Easier During Allergy Season from Georgia's Clean Air Force

ATLANTA (March 8, 2018) – Each spring, residents of metro Atlanta brace themselves for the dreaded allergy season. Each year as early as March, pollen and other airborne allergens fill the air and trigger allergies and air quality concerns, especially for those with asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

Allergy season presents a significant health concern for adults and children in Georgia, where 626,931 adults and 11 percent of children suffer from asthma, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Recent studies have revealed that two air pollutants from automobile emissions – nitrogen dioxide and ground-level ozone – could be major contributing factors to the severity of symptoms during allergy season. These studies suggested that these two pollutants can increase the potency of airborne allergens and can make them more common.

[Georgia's Clean Air Force](#), a partnership with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), wants to remind Georgians that cleaner vehicle emissions are not only important for the environment, but also for the health of residents of Georgia.

Since 1996, Georgia's Inspection and Maintenance Program has identified and repaired more than 3.2 million heavy-polluting vehicles. This has played a part in preventing more than 1.6 million tons of harmful ozone-forming pollutants from entering the air we breathe.

"Being a responsible vehicle owner can certainly save money, but more importantly, you can help contribute to cleaner air in the metro Atlanta region by practicing these five common sense tips," said Pamela T. Earl, Program Manager, Mobile & Area Sources, EPD.

1. **Avoid Aggressive Driving.** In addition to creating unsafe conditions for other drivers, driving aggressively can increase fuel consumption and exhaust emissions. Avoid heavy braking, which can reduce both fuel consumption by as much as 30 percent.
2. **Car Pool to Work and School.** Setting up a neighborhood carpool for school drop-offs and pickups and getting to and from work will help limit pollutants from entering the air, as well as save time and money.
3. **Lose the Junk in the Trunk.** Items in your vehicle can add unnecessary weight, adversely impacting your vehicle's performance and fuel economy. For every extra 100 pounds, a typical vehicle's fuel economy can be reduced by 1-2 percent.
4. **Don't Idle Your Engine.** Idling can consume up to one gallon of gas per hour and releases pollutants into the air. Engines in today's vehicles consume less fuel by being turned off and re-started instead of idling the engine.

5. **Check Your Tires.** It's good practice to check your vehicle's tire pressure once a month. You can improve your gas mileage by up to three percent by setting your tire pressure to the manufacturer's suggested setting.

For additional information and to download an infographic from Georgia's Clean Air Force on allergy season in Atlanta, visit 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 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.

#