



## Air Quality in Maricopa County and Gilbert

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has found that Maricopa County is not in compliance with national air pollution standards for particulate matter (PM) or dust. In order to come into compliance and to make our air healthier, Maricopa County and the municipalities, including Gilbert, are taking steps to reduce the air pollution caused by dust.

You may think that because we live in a desert all of this dust is natural, this isn't the case. Undisturbed desert soil is actually very hard, almost like walking on pavement. When we start building houses or other buildings or using the desert for recreation that disturbs the soil, it can become unstable and produce more dust.

So, what is Gilbert doing to reduce this pollution, and how can you help?

### What Gilbert is doing to help?

- Ordinance 1090 restricts access to vacant lots without the property owner's authority. This allows Code Enforcement and the Gilbert Police Department to stop people who may be trespassing and causing dust.
- Ordinance 1091 requires certain parking lots to be paved or dust proofed. Unpaved parking lots can be a big source of dust in our neighborhoods.
- Gilbert paves or applies dust suppressant to unpaved shoulders as problems are found. Using a dirt shoulder to cut around the line of traffic waiting to turn left at that light can cause dust to be thrown into the air sometimes even making it hard to see the road.
- Gilbert fences and maintains stability of Gilbert owned vacant lots.
- Gilbert has a trip reduction program in which employees are encouraged to find alternative methods of commuting to work.



### What can you do to help?

- Don't pass on dirt shoulders, this causes instability and dusty conditions. Call Gilbert Public Works (480-503-6400) if you see a dusty road shoulder.
- If you have to drive on dirt roads, drive slowly. This will help reduce the amount of dust that is kicked up.
- Don't take shortcuts across vacant land. This not only causes dust to be kicked up but it can be very expensive for the property owner in terms of cost of stabilizing it as well as possible fines from Maricopa County Air Quality.
- If you own vacant land, maintain a soil crust or cover bare soil. This will help prevent erosion from both wind and water.
- Fence or post no trespassing signs on your vacant land. This will help to keep trespassers off which can help reduce soil erosion and instability.
- If you own horses, either install a mulch cover or dampen the soil in the area you ride before riding. This will help reduce the amount of dust that is kicked up.
- Before lighting that cozy fire on cool winter nights, call Maricopa County at 602-506-6010 to make sure it isn't a "No Burn Day." Any fire burning wood on "No Burn Days" is prohibited. Go to [www.maricopa.gov/airquality](http://www.maricopa.gov/airquality) for more information.
- If possible, use an alternative method of getting to work on high pollution advisory days such as car or vanpooling, telecommute, riding a bike or the bus to work.
- Report air quality complaints to Maricopa County Air Quality at 602-372-2703 or online at [http://www.maricopa.gov/airquality/contact\\_us/report\\_violation.aspx](http://www.maricopa.gov/airquality/contact_us/report_violation.aspx).

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