

Enviromental effects of air pollution and the urban area

[Environment](#), [Pollution](#)



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Air pollution has been and is a growing environmental problem that is closely related to the growth of urban settlements. While the cities and towns of the world grow larger they emit more and more toxic emissions are put out into the air. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the issues that surround air pollution such as the long term impacts of air pollution, the short term impacts of air pollution, the long term outlook of air pollution, the short term outlook of air pollution and the potential solutions to the air pollution problem.

Air pollution is an environmental problem that affects each and every one of us to some degree and it is important to understand why air pollution happens and how we can take steps to control it. Air pollution has a direct connection with urban environments all over the world. With an increase in industrialized countries, the use of cars, factories and also the use of fuels such as fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide, into the air, there has been a definite rise in air pollution over the world (Mayer, 1999).

There are many short term effects that air pollution causes to the urban areas and to the people who are living in those areas. The first short term effect of air pollution is that it can cause health issues for the inhabitants of the area. Air pollution can cause the inhabitants to get itchy throats and irritated eyes. It also has been linked to causes bronchitis and pneumonia (Silverman, et al, 2007). Short term air pollution exposure can also cause an increase the rate of allergy infections and asthma diagnosis to the people who live in the area.

The short term effects on environment range from smog clouds can cause the health issues, like the ones previously mentioned (Silverman, et al, 2007).

There are also long term effects of air pollutions that are very serious to the environment and the people who live in high polluted areas. Long term air pollution exposure can have devastating effects on the health of the people who live in the area. Some of the health risks that have been linked to long term exposure consist of chronic respiratory disease, lung cancer, heart disease, and damage to the brain, kidney's or liver (Mayer, 1999).

Children who are living in a highly polluted area risk developing these diseases at a higher rate than the normal children who do not have long term exposure to air pollution. Long term air pollution also has devastating effects on the environment. One of the more serious effects is that air pollution is slowly deteriorating the Ozone layer. The Ozone layer is found in the stratosphere and it plays an important role in protecting the earth from the sun's ultraviolet rays.

Due to the increase in greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, the Ozone has developed holes and this allows harmful ultraviolet B-radiation to reach the earth. The increase of B-radiation is harmful to humans, plants and animals, and it is a known cause of Melanoma. The increase of B-radiation is always extremely harmful to plants. It causes a decrease in plant growth, height and damage to the leaves of plants (Tong, 2011). There are some potential ways to reduce, but not fully solve, the air pollution problem that is effect most urban areas.

One of the ways that the countries around the world have decided to reduce air pollution was in 1997 at a United Nations conference in Kyoto, Japan. During the conference countries signed a treaty, the Kyoto Protocol promising to combat global warming by reducing the emissions of harmful greenhouse gases that are produced by industrial factories. Unfortunately, claiming that that the treaty was not in the best interest for their country, the United States did not sign the treaty (Murray, 2001).

Another potential way to reduce air pollution is through technology advancement. Using the new technologies to replace fossil fuels, such as coal burning and oil use, would substantially lower the gas emissions that cause air pollution and eventually cause the ozone layer to deplete. The short term outlook of air pollution on urban society is somewhat hopeful. Many cities and countries have begun or are beginning to take action in reducing the amount of pollution that is released into the air by the industries, cars and citizens.

Many cities have started using different sources of energy, like solar power, in place of the fossil fuel energy sources that are the main contributors to air pollution. The long term outlook of air pollution is that, with many countries pledging to reduce the pollution over the coming years, the levels of air pollution will be lower in the future. Unfortunately, there is much debate over how greenhouse gases affect the ozone layer and global warming. Until this debate is over and people can agree, not enough action will be taken to help reduce the air pollution in the urban setting.