



## Graded Response Action Plan

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### Why in News

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The **Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority (EPCA)** has directed Delhi and neighbouring States to implement air pollution control measures under **very poor** and **severe** category air quality of the **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** from 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

### Key Points

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#### Graded Response Action Plan:

- The action plan which was **formulated in 2016 and notified in 2017** for Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR).
- The plan was formulated after several meetings were held by **Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA)** with state government representatives and experts.
- These are **institutionalized measures to be taken when air quality deteriorates**, hence **works only as an emergency measure**.
- GRAP includes the measures which will be taken by different government agencies to prevent worsening of Air Quality of Delhi-NCR and prevent **PM10** and **PM2.5** levels to go beyond the 'moderate' national **Air Quality Index (AQI)** category.
- If air quality reaches the **severe+ stage**, GRAP talks about **shutting down schools and implementing the odd-even road-space rationing scheme**.
- The plan requires action and coordination among **13 different agencies in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan (NCR areas)**.

Category	Ambient Particulate Matter (PM) Concentration	Measures
Moderate to Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PM 2.5 between 61-120 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> <li>PM10 between 101-350 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce pollution control in thermal power plants</li> <li>Mechanized sweeping on roads</li> <li>Ban on firecrackers</li> <li>Stop garbage burning</li> </ul>
Very Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PM2.5 between 121-250 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> <li>PM10 between 351-430 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop use of diesel generator sets</li> <li>Increase bus and metro services and increasing frequency of metro service</li> <li>Stop use of coal/firewood in hotels and open eateries</li> </ul>
Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PM2.5 more than 250 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> <li>PM10 more than 430 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase frequency of mechanized sweeping of road and sprinkling of water on roads</li> <li>Close brick kilns, Hot Mix plants, Stone Crushers</li> <li>Shut down Badarpur power plant</li> <li>Introduce concessional rates to encourage off-peak travel in public transport.</li> </ul>
Severe+ or Emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PM2.5 of or more than 300 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> <li>PM10 of or 500 <math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math></li> </ul> <p>(persist for 48 hours or more)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop entry of diesel trucks into Delhi (except essential commodities)</li> <li>Stop construction activities</li> <li>Introduce odd and even scheme</li> <li>Shutting of schools</li> </ul>

**Reasons of Winter Pollution in Delhi:** Apart from the other pollution which are due to overpopulation, vehicular emissions and industries, following are the factors that make winter pollution severe:

- **Stubble Burning:** It is a traditional practice in Punjab and Haryana to clean off the rice chaff to prepare the fields for winter sowing.
- **Shifting of Jet Stream:** The southward shift of subtropical jet stream happens causing a westward wind pattern in the northern part of India and thus spread of pollutants.
- **Stagnant Lower Level Winds:** As the winter season sets in, dust particles and pollutants in the air become unable to move. Due to **stagnant lower level winds**, pollutants get locked in the air and affect weather conditions, resulting in **smog**.

## **Environment Pollution Control Authority**

- It was notified in 1998 under the **Environment Protection Act, 1986**.
- EPCA is a **Supreme Court mandated body** tasked with taking various measures to tackle air pollution in the National Capital Region.

## **Way Forward**

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- The economy is already under stress post-lockdown so the combined effort is to ensure that there is no further disruption.
- Pollution will make Covid-19 “more dangerous” and therefore, there must be zero-tolerance for air pollution during this period, as it will come at “huge human health cost”.

**Source: TH**