



Graded Response Action Plan

Why in News

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 15th October 2020.

Key Points

▪ 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).**

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

- 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

- 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

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/graded-response-action-plan>