

Introduction

Photographs of Visible Air Pollution

Air pollution can sometimes be fatal.

The 1948 smog episode in Donora, PA killed ~20 people and hospitalized 600. The episode was the first post-war pollution emergency, and is seen as an historical turning point for public concern about environmental issues.

View of Donora, PA as deadly smog envelops the Washington Co. community. Photo courtesy *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 1948.

Photo circa 1900. Fortunately, we don't have this kind of air pollution anymore!

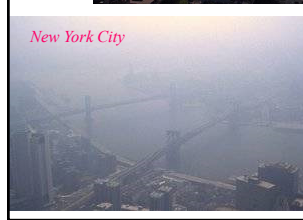


Air pollution is often visible.



Mexico City

New York City



Montreal



China



Types of visible air pollutants

Particulate pollutants:

- Smoke
- Soot
- Flyash
- Dust
- Fumes
- Mist

(Always visible)

Gaseous pollutants:

- Gases
- Vapors

E.g., sulfur dioxide (SO₂) is clear but appears blue when it reacts with the atmosphere;

Nitrous oxides (NO_x) gas forms a brownish haze (smog).

(Not always visible)

