

# Smog so bad even the healthy must avoid exercising

Ben Webster Environment Editor

Air pollution will be so bad in some south coast towns tomorrow that even healthy people should reduce physical exertion, a government health warning suggests.

A combination of pollution from France, dust from the Sahara and diesel vehicle emissions is forecast to produce the country's most severe air pollution for a year. The worst-affected area is expected to be around Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings, where the forecast is for "very high" pollution, or ten on a scale of one to ten.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said that in this area, the general population should "reduce physical exertion, particularly

experiences discomfort, such as painful eyes, a cough or a sore throat should "consider reducing physical activity", particularly if they are outdoors.

Unlike the smog episode in April last year, which lasted several days, Defra said Atlantic winds were expected to disperse the polluted air by Saturday morning.

Simon Birkett, director of the campaign group Clean Air in London, said: "This is the most serious air pollution episode since the so-called Sahara Dust episode a year ago. Paris is taking action — banning cars, issuing smog warnings and announcing ambitious plans to become the cycling capital of the world. In London there is no action. It's time we took air pollution seriously."

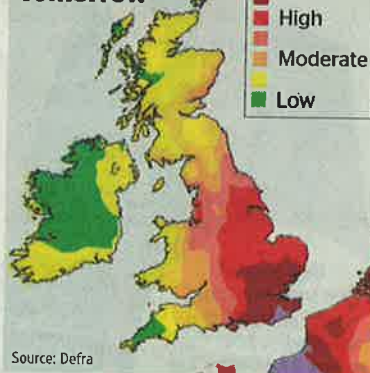
Penny Woods, chief executive of the British Lung Foundation, said: "People who find their health affected can take simple steps such as avoiding busy roads, especially during rush hour, and refraining from strenuous exercise outside. With periods of high pollution often resulting from a combination of domestically produced pollution and that coming from mainland Europe, we need urgent action from the government to clean up the air we breathe."

A legal action brought by the environmental group ClientEarth against the government over levels of air pollution that breach European Union rules is due to return to the Supreme Court next week.

Philip Insall, the director of health for the cycling charity Sustrans, said: "The poor state of air pollution in Britain is both criminal and a national embarrassment. We know that local air pollution is causing at least 29,000 premature deaths a year and we know that it is primarily due to emissions from motor traffic. It's clear that we can only address this by reducing reliance on motor vehicles."

"The next government will need to get a grip on air pollution. That will mean serious, dedicated investment and an effective programme of action to help more people out of their cars and choosing walking and cycling for short journeys."

Air pollution levels  
Tomorrow



outdoors, especially if you experience symptoms such as cough or sore throat".

It said people with lung or heart problems and older people "should avoid strenuous physical activity". Asthma sufferers should be prepared to use their inhalers more often.

Air pollution in the rest of the south-east, including London, is expected to be nine out of ten but it will still be rated "high" in central, eastern and northern England.

For areas affected by "high" pollution, Defra advises that anyone who

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