

AIR POLLUTION

Air pollution may be defined as the presence of toxic chemicals or compounds (including those of biological origin) in the air, at levels that pose a health risk.

OR

In an broader sense, air pollution means the presence of chemicals or compounds in the air which are usually not present and which lower the quality of the air or cause detrimental changes to the quality of life (such as the damaging of the ozone layer or causing global warming).

Most Common Types of Air Pollutants

A large number of contaminants may pollute the air in a large variety of forms. Almost any toxic chemical could make its way into the atmosphere to pollute the air that we breathe.

The chemical compounds that lower the air quality are usually referred to as air pollutants.

These compounds may be found in the air in two major forms:

- in a gaseous form (as gases),
- in a solid form (as particulate matter suspended in the air).

They may also be classified as:

- Primary Pollutant : these are emitted directly from the point source (identifiable source) e.g. CO Oxides of nitrogen, Oxides of Sulphur , Radioactive substance etc.
- Secondary Pollutant : these are formed by the interaction of two or more primary pollutant or by a primary pollutant and with some Natural constituent of the atmosphere such as Photochemical Smog , PEROXYACETYL Nitrate (PAN)

Sources of air pollution:

Here are four main types of air pollution sources:

- mobile sources – such as cars, buses, planes, trucks, and trains
- stationary sources – such as power plants, oil refineries, industrial facilities, and factories
- area sources – such as agricultural areas, cities, and wood burning fireplaces
- natural sources – such as wind-blown dust, wildfires, and volcanoes

Mobile sources account for more than half of all the air pollution in the United States and the primary mobile source of air pollution is the automobile, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Stationary sources, like power plants, emit large amounts of pollution from a single location, these are also known as point sources of pollution. They make up area sources of lots of smaller pollution sources that are not a big deal but when considered as a group can be. Natural sources can sometimes be significant but do not usually create ongoing air pollution problems like the other source types can.