



State of Utah

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## Utah Concludes Winter Inversion Season, Residents Proactively Engaged

SALT LAKE CITY — Preliminary data evaluated by the Utah Division of Air Quality (DAQ) indicates that while Utah's seven nonattainment counties experienced lower peak unhealthy fine particulate (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) values than a year ago, the winter was worse than average in terms of the total number of inversion days.

Initial air monitoring numbers collected by DAQ show a combined total of 31 days above the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) 24-hour standard for fine particulates during the seasonal wood burn restriction program, which extends November 1 through March 1.

Comparatively, during the same period in 2012-2013, Utah's nonattainment areas experienced a combined total of 29 days above the NAAQS 24-hour standard, which is 35 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

"Every year is different than the last because meteorology plays a major role in the number and duration of inversions we experience," said Bryce Bird, director of DAQ. "While we are optimistic that we will continue to see improved air quality because of the rules and regulations in place, this winter confirms that we need to increase our combined efforts to reduce the emissions that are trapped by the inversions."

In effort to help curb the steep rise in air pollution concentrations during this past winter's inversions, DAQ proactively called for voluntary and mandatory action before air pollution exceeded the NAAQS 24-hour standard. In Salt Lake and Davis counties, for example, DAQ called for 18 voluntary action days and 31 mandatory action days out of the 120-day winter period. These actions included specific restrictions on solid fuel burning, as well as voluntary recommendations for individual travel and activities at home and in the community.

With air quality top of mind, Utah residents responded to the call for action. DAQ received a total of 311 wood burning complaints this winter, and issued 55 citations for wood burning violations. In comparison, DAQ received 86 complaints and issued 16 citations during the same period in 2012-2013.

In addition, DAQ's new UtahAir app, which launched in November 2013 and provides real-time air quality information, had nearly 500,000 sessions (visits) during January 2014 alone. The UtahAir app is available for free download in both the Apple and Android apps stores.

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DAQ is now looking ahead to the summer Ozone season, which extends from May through September, when the recipe of hot temperatures mixed with vehicle and industrial emissions can pose health risks for residents. DAQ will continue to push out air quality alerts through the UtahAir app, website ([www.airquality.utah.gov](http://www.airquality.utah.gov)), toll-free messages (1-800-228-5434), and regular email updates ([www.deq.utah.gov/ListServ](http://www.deq.utah.gov/ListServ)).

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**About DEQ**

Established in 1991, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) mission is to safeguard public health and quality of life by protecting and enhancing the environment. DEQ implements state and federal environmental laws and works with individuals, community groups and businesses to protect the quality of Utah's air, land and water. For more information, visit [www.deq.utah.gov](http://www.deq.utah.gov), follow DEQ on Facebook ([newseq](#)) and Twitter ([@UTDEQ](#)), or call 1-800-458-0145.