Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) is one of a group of gases known as sulphur oxides (SOX). SO₂ has some direct health effects but is also an important chemical leading to the formation of particulate matter (PM), a component of smog. SO₂ also contributes to the formation of acid rain.

**WHO IS MOST AT RISK FROM AIR POLLUTION?**
Even healthy young adults can experience health issues on days when the air is heavily polluted but some groups are more at risk:

- Children
- Seniors
- People with asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cardiovascular diseases, diabetes
- Active people of all ages who exercise or work hard outdoors

**HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM AIR POLLUTION?**

Know the best times to be active outdoors:

- Check the Air Quality Health Index in your community (airhealth.ca)
- If you have a heart or lung condition, talk to your health care professional about additional ways to protect your health when air pollution levels are higher

Ways to reduce exposure:

- Avoid or reduce strenuous outdoor activities when air pollution levels are higher

**WHAT ACTION IS THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TAKING ON SULPHUR DIOXIDE?**

- Federal regulations have reduced SO₂ emissions in Canada from key sources.
- Canada has agreed to international treaties to reduce SO₂ emissions.
- Canada has established the Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS): These are health- and environment-based numerical values of outdoor air concentrations of pollutants intended to drive continuous air quality improvement in Canada. The CAAQS, a key element of the Air Quality Management System, were developed through a process steered by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME).

**LEVELS OF SULPHUR DIOXIDE IN OUTDOOR AIR**

Levels of SO₂ in outdoor air are higher in certain areas of Canada, such as communities close to some types of industrial facilities and in areas of oil and gas extraction.

More information can be found on the STATE OF THE AIR website http://airquality-qualitedelair.ccme.ca/en

**VALUES OF SULPHUR DIOXIDE (SO₂) IN OUTDOOR AIR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pollutant</th>
<th>Averaging Time</th>
<th>Effective in 2020</th>
<th>Effective in 2025</th>
<th>Units Effective in 2025</th>
<th>Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SO₂</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Parts per billion (ppb)</td>
<td>The 3-year average of the annual 99th percentile of the daily-maximum 1-hour average concentrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual (1 year)</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>The average over a single calendar year of all the 1-hour average concentrations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on air pollution, please visit www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/air-quality.html or contact us at: HC.air.SC@canada.ca