

Durham's first 2008 smog advisory

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DURHAM -- Spring brings sunshine, flowers and smog advisories.

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment released its first smog advisory of 2008 on Friday.

An advisory is issued when there is a high probability of elevated smog levels. Durham was one of a number of regions included in the warning.

This is the first smog advisory of the year but not the earliest one that has ever been issued. In 2005 there was a smog advisory in February, ministry spokeswoman Kate Jordan said.

"It is outside the typical smog season which starts May 1," said Ms. Jordan.

High levels of smog in Ontario are a result of warm weather combined with polluted air coming up from the U.S. and a buildup of pollutants locally.

Oshawa had an air-quality index rating of 47, which is considered moderate, at 3 p.m. according to the ministry's website. The scale rates 0-15 as being very good and 100+ being very poor.

The ministry's website outlines a number of things people can do to reduce smog including reducing car use, making sure your car is running well if you do use it and setting your air conditioner a few degrees higher. For more information on air quality visit the ministry's website www.airqualityontario.com.