

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

October 7, 2022

In news– The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has recently said that measures under 'Stage-1' of the GRAP will be enforced in the NCR with immediate effect.

What is GRAP?

- GRAP is a set of **emergency measures that kick in to prevent further deterioration of air quality once it reaches a certain threshold.**
- Stage 1 of GRAP is activated when the AQI is in the 'poor' category (201 to 300).
- The second, third and fourth stages will be activated three days ahead of the AQI reaching the 'very poor' category (301 to 400), 'severe' category (401 to 450) and 'severe +' category (above 450) respectively.
- For this, the CAQM is relying on air quality and meteorological forecasts by the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD).**
- Measures being imposed under the previous categories will continue even when the subsequent category is activated, that is, if measures under Stage-2 are activated, measures under Stage-1 will continue to remain in place.
- The CAQM revised the Graded Response Action Plan earlier in 2022.
- **The GRAP was first notified in January 2017 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. This was based on a plan that was submitted by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in November 2016.**
- According to the notification, the task of implementing the GRAP fell on the now dissolved Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority for the NCR.

- In the version of the GRAP that was notified in 2017, measures kicked in after pollution concentrations reached a certain level.
- For 2022, measures are pre-emptive and will kick in based on forecasts in an attempt to prevent the AQI from deteriorating further. The older version of the GRAP was enforced based only on the concentration of PM2.5 and PM10.
- Now GRAP is being enforced based on the AQI, which takes other pollutants also into account, such as ozone, sulphur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen.

Implementation-

- **From 2021 onwards, the GRAP is being implemented by the CAQM.**
- The CAQM has constituted a sub-committee for the operationalization of the GRAP.
- This body includes officials from the CAQM, member secretaries of pollution control boards of Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, the Central Pollution Control Board, a scientist from the IMD and one from the IITM.
- **The orders and directions of the CAQM will prevail in case of any conflict between directions issued by the State governments and the CAQM.**
- **Measures under the different categories of the plan are to be enforced by the pollution control boards of the NCR states and the concerned departments and agencies, including the traffic police, the Transport Department and road owning and construction agencies.**

The revised GRAP for 2022-

- Some of the measures in the revised GRAP are also different in 2022. **For the first time, it specifies that**

State governments in the NCR may impose restrictions on BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel four wheelers under Stage-3, or when the AQI is likely to reach the 'severe' category.

- **In the 'severe +' category, GRAP imposes a ban on plying of four-wheelers in Delhi and NCR districts bordering Delhi**, except for BS-VI vehicles and those plying for emergency or essential services.
- Under this category, there will **also be a ban on the movement of Delhi registered, diesel-operated medium and heavy goods vehicles in Delhi**, with exceptions for those carrying essential commodities or providing essential services.
- Restrictions on some construction activities will also set in earlier in the revised GRAP.
- A **ban on construction activities** (except for those involving railways, projects of national security, hospitals, metro services, and linear public projects like highways, roads) will be imposed under the 'severe' category.
- **In the previous plan, the construction ban was implemented only in the 'severe +' category.**
- Construction activities on linear public projects like highways, roads, flyovers, pipelines and power transmission, will be banned under the 'severe +' category this year.
- **Under the 'severe +' category, State governments may consider additional emergency measures like the closure of schools**, plying of vehicles on an odd-even basis, and decide on allowing public, municipal and private offices to work on 50% strength and the rest to work from home.
- The revised GRAP also has a set of measures for the public to follow – under the 'poor' category, this includes **keeping vehicle engines tuned, ensuring PUC certificates are updated and switching off vehicle**

engines at red lights.

- Under the 'very poor' category, it is suggested that citizens **use public transport and replace air filters in their automobiles.**
- Under the 'severe' category, a recommendation is made to **work from home if possible,** and not use coal and wood for heating.
- Under the 'severe +' category, GRAP advises people with chronic diseases and children and the elderly to **avoid outdoor activities.**

Further

reading:

<https://journalsofindia.com/commission-for-air-quality-management-in-the-national-capital-region-and-adjoining-areas-bill-2021/>