

Report on status of air pollution in Delhi/NCR and need for urgency to enforce directives of Hon'ble Supreme Court and further steps to check pollution during winter months when there is public health emergency

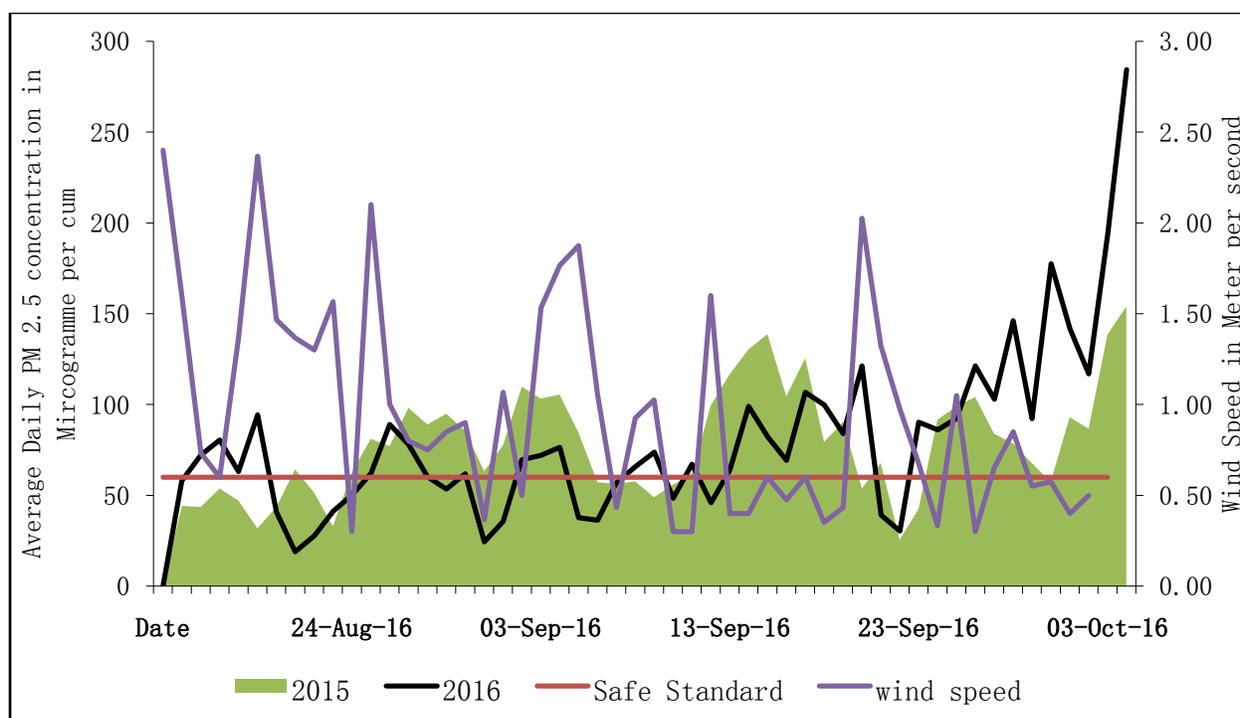
Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority for NCR

October 5, 2016

1. Assessment of current pollution levels

Each year, as a trend, PM_{2.5} levels build up rapidly after the monsoon and peak during winter, when inversion is high. This year the trend so far has shown comparatively lower levels than levels during the same months (August 15 to October 3) in 2015. However, there has been a sudden escalation in PM_{2.5} levels from September 25, 2016 onwards. This coincides with drop in wind speed compared to the previous days and suggests that pollution will increase as winter sets in.

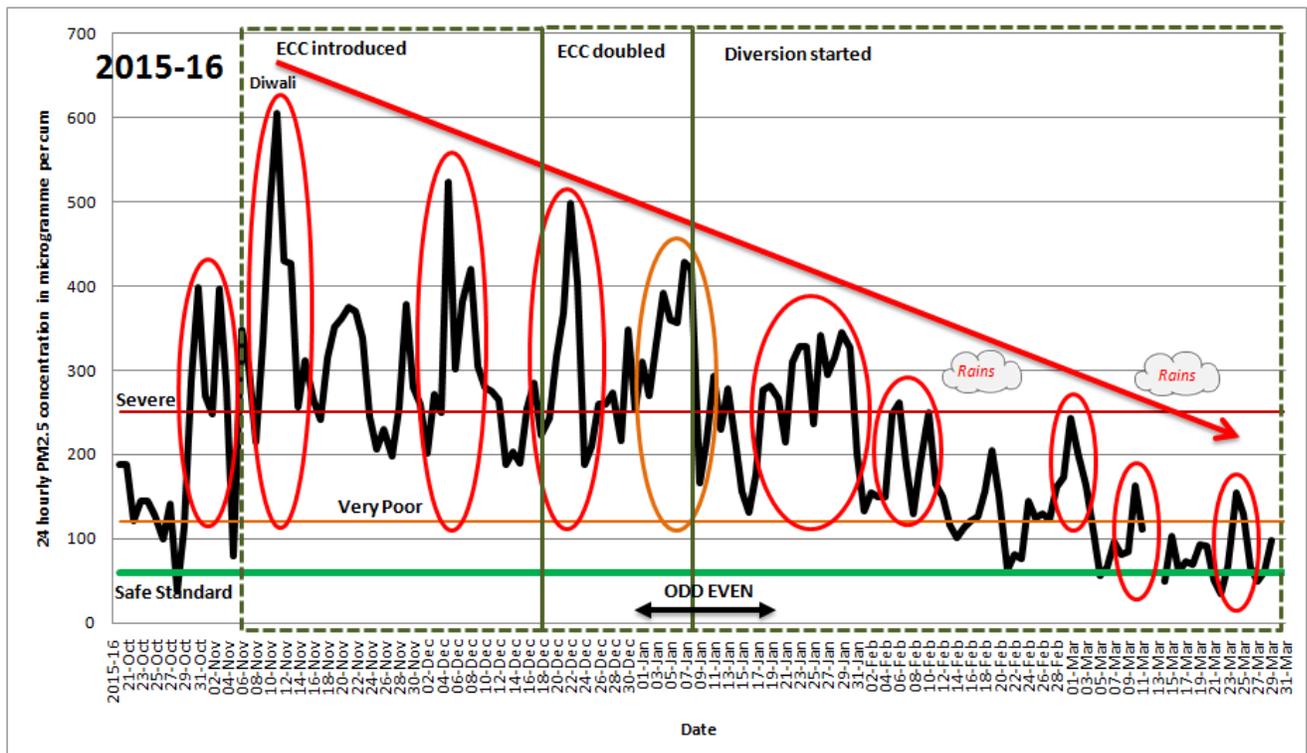
Graph: Comparison of PM_{2.5} trend at the onset of winter of 2016 and 2015 (for the months August 15 to October 3)



Source: Analysis based on real time data from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee

2. Impact of imposition of ECC on trucks entering Delhi

This is the most important step taken to check runaway pollution and as can be seen in the chart below, there is visible difference in the levels of air pollution after the imposition of ECC. But it is also clear that enforcement will be critical for this measure to have continued impact. It is also clear that much more will need to be done to control toxic air pollution in Delhi and its neighbouring areas.



Source: CSE analysis based on real time data from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee

3. Directions needed for further air pollution control

The Hon'ble Supreme Court has passed important directions to control air pollution in Delhi. It is critical that there is strict enforcement of these orders. EPCA is constrained to point out as in many cases, actions are lax and do not recognize the urgency of toxic air pollution, particularly in winter months. The status of enforcement of the various directives already given by the Hon'ble Supreme Court is detailed in the EPCA report dated October 5, 2016 on compliance.

There is also need for further urgent actions to be taken to control air pollution. This is because during winter calm and cool weather condition trap pollution that makes Delhi a gas chamber with serious health impacts. This means that pollution from continuous sources like vehicles, power plants and industry as well as episodic pollution like waste burning and construction activities needs to be controlled with aggressive early action.

Priority actions for control of pollution in winter are as follows:

1. **Strict enforcement of ECC on Delhi-bound trucks** so that there is control on numbers, including enforcement to check and divert all non-Delhi bound truck traffic and age limit (as stipulated by Hon'ble Supreme Court). Ensuring the early introduction of RFID will improve compliance and enforcement of this measure.
2. **Strict enforcement by GNCTD and municipal bodies of Hon'ble Supreme Court directives on control of dust pollution** from construction activities; road and
3. **Strict enforcement by GNCTD/municipal agencies on ban on garbage burning.** Long-term action on control of emissions from garbage burning needs to be assessed and taken.
4. **Urgent action to control pollution from thermal power plant in Delhi and its vicinity** by shutting down plants during winter months and moving towards natural gas based power plants in the long run (please see item no 17 in compliance report). Urgent action to reduce pollution from fly ash dumps in thermal power plants.
5. **Strict action by Punjab/Haryana to control biomass burning** through enforcement and by providing farmers alternatives to use paddy straw for energy and for tilling into ground for manure.
6. **Strict enforcement by all pollution control boards on control of air pollution from industries,** brick kilns and other sources of air pollution.
7. **Enforcement of all actions and directives to move vehicles towards cleaner technologies; fuels and emission standards.** This includes move towards BS IV (nationwide) by April 2017; BS VI (nationwide) by

April 2020; increased introduction of CNG in NCR as already directed by Hon'ble Supreme Court and control on dieselization of vehicles.

8. **Comprehensive steps to augment public transport in Delhi and connectivity with NCR**, including bus, rail, metro and walk and cycle for last mile connectivity and increased parking charges. This is the most important action that needs to be taken urgently as it is the only way that Delhi/NCR will be able to address air pollution and restrain the growth of private vehicles. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has already directed GNCTD to augment bus fleet and metro to increase its passenger capacity. But much more needs to be done to build public transport network with last mile connectivity and governments in NCR along with Union Ministry of Urban Development must provide the comprehensive and multi-modal plan, which can then be monitored for implementation.