

Fact Sheet

Global Warming

What is it?

Global warming refers to the dangerous rise in the Earth's temperature over a short period of time.

If present trends continue, the Earth's surface temperature could rise between 2 and 5 degrees Celsius over the next 50 years. This rapid rate of temperature change has never happened before in human history.

What are the causes?

The main cause of global warming is human behaviour: our cars, industries and energy production. Human activities produce and add to the atmosphere too much of the following gases:

- Carbon dioxide: released into the air by the burning of fossil fuels, and through the destruction of the world's rainforests
- Methane: released into the air during oil, gas and coal extraction and produced, in minor quantities, from the burning of biomass and fossil fuels
- Nitrous oxide: released into the air by the burning of fossil fuels and the use of fertilizers

! THE GASES TRAP THE HEAT OF THE SUN AND SEND IT BACK TO THE EARTH. !

What are the effects?

Global warming will have devastating effects. The rise in temperature is expected to alter world rainfall patterns, and partially melt the polar ice caps causing sea levels to rise. The result will be widespread flooding in coastal areas. Some areas will be completely submerged.

Other effects of global warming are:

- Millions of people could be displaced from low-lying lands, becoming environmental refugees
- Global geographic patterns may shift and key forested areas could disappear
- Key agricultural regions could dry up and world-wide food production could seriously decline
- Great Lakes water levels could drop by more than two metres, disrupting water supply everywhere
- Air pollution in urban areas could increase due to warmer seasons

What you can do

- Buy food and other products with reusable or recyclable packaging instead of in non-recyclable containers
- Recycle all of your waste, newsprint, cardboard, glass, and metal
- Leave your car at home two days a week (walk, bike, or take the bus to work).
- Purchase a fuel-efficient car
- Plant trees around your home and neighbourhood; evidence suggests that vegetation can help reduce the concentration of air contaminants in the urban atmosphere

Source

Top Ten Things You Can Do to Prevent Global Warming. City of Portland Energy Office.