

Smog and Mirrors

We all know that toxic air makes breathing difficult, but figures from a Canadian Medical Association report reflect the true health costs of air pollution

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Death by breath

22,000 Number of Canadians who are predicted to die prematurely in 2009 from the effects of air pollution

2,700+ Number predicted to die from acute short-term exposure (as on a smog-alert day)

65+ Age bracket of 80% of Canadians dying from the effects of air pollution in 2009

70% Proportion of premature pollution-related deaths accounted for by residents of Quebec and Ontario

62% Proportion of Canada's population living in Quebec and Ontario

700,000+ Number predicted to die from the long-term effects of air pollution from 2008 to 2031

90,000 Number who will die to 2031 from acute short-term exposure to air pollution

25 Number of Canadians under age 19 predicted to die from the effects of short-term exposure to air pollution in 2009

The costs of contamination

620,000+ Number of predicted office visits to physicians for air pollution-related problems in 2009

90,000+ Predicted number of air-pollution-related emergency room visits in 2009

11,000 Predicted number of air-pollution-related hospital stays in 2009

\$8 billion+ Economic impact of air pollution due to health-care costs and worker absenteeism in 2009

\$250 billion+ Cumulative total of economic costs between 2008 and 2031

— *No Breathing Room: National Illness Costs of Air Pollution*, Canadian Medical Association, 2008, updated for 2009