

The ABCs of GHGs

The term “greenhouse gas” (GHG) appears frequently in the discussion about global warming but is rarely defined, perhaps leaving you wondering what exactly greenhouse gases are and what harm they can do.

As ominous as they sound, greenhouse gases are typically helpful elements in our atmosphere—water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, ozone and nitrous oxide—that contribute to its “greenhouse effect.” The ability of the atmosphere to retain and reflect radiant heat from the earth is actually a good thing; without it, we’d be getting frostbite in Fiji.

But since the Industrial Revolution, the steady rise of “anthropogenic” greenhouse gases (those made by humans) has made the greenhouse work too well—hence, global warming. Disrupted weather patterns and receding polar ice caps have been the result, and this disruption touches every aspect of our global community, from what we eat to where we live.

Data source:
www.globalwarming.org.in
Global estimates for
gas percentages

Carbon Dioxide
(72%)

power stations, industrial processes,
transportation fuels, residential/commercial

Methane
(18%)

agricultural
byproducts, fossil
fuel retrieval, waste
disposal and
treatment

Nitrous
Oxide
(9%)

agricultural
byproducts, land
use/biomass burning,
industrial processes

Other
Gases
(1%)

TRIPLE IMPACT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10