

CO₂ Fact Sheet

Passenger cars and light trucks contribute about 20 percent of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions in the United States, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Carbon dioxide is an abundant gas in the atmosphere that is emitted a number of ways, including naturally through the Earth's carbon cycle and through human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels that power our cars and trucks and provide electricity to our homes and businesses.

Since the Industrial Revolution in the 1700's, human activities such as the burning of oil, coal, gas and deforestation have increased carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere.

Industrial producers of electricity from the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil and natural gas are the biggest man-made contributors of carbon dioxide emissions in the U.S.

Total electricity generation from coal, oil and natural gas contribute about 40 percent of total carbon dioxide emissions in the U.S., according to the Energy Information Administration (EIA).

Transportation-related emissions, which account for about a third of total energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, increased by a modest 0.1 percent in 2007, according to EIA. The entire transportation sector includes trucking, airlines, ships and boats, railroads and automobiles.

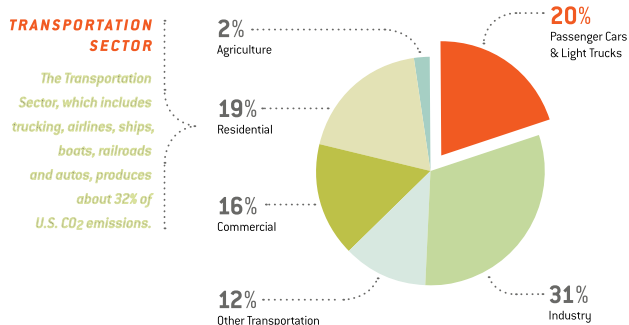
Carbon dioxide emissions from the residential and commercial sectors increased by 4.4 percent and 4.3 percent respectively in 2007, according to EIA. The commercial sector includes all non-residential, non-industrial buildings, such as stores, office buildings, schools, hospitals and government buildings.

The largest source of carbon dioxide emissions globally is the combustion of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas in power plants, automobiles, industrial facilities and other sources. Transport-related emissions contribute about 24 percent of carbon dioxide globally.

Natural sources of carbon dioxide occur within the carbon cycle (ocean, land and atmosphere) where billions of tons of carbon dioxide are removed from the atmosphere by oceans and growing plants. There is about 50 times as much carbon dissolved in the oceans than exists in the atmosphere.

Autos are 20% of CO₂

According to EPA*, autos account for 20% of all man-made carbon dioxide emissions in the U.S. ▾



*www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/usinventoryreport.html