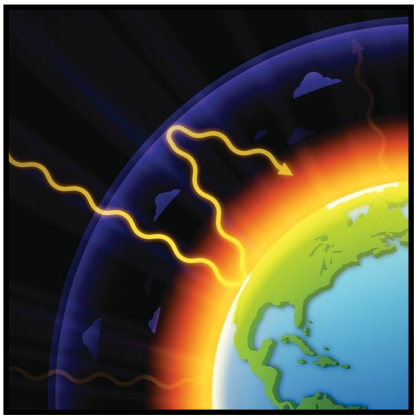
DLA DISTRIBUTION

Earth Day 2024

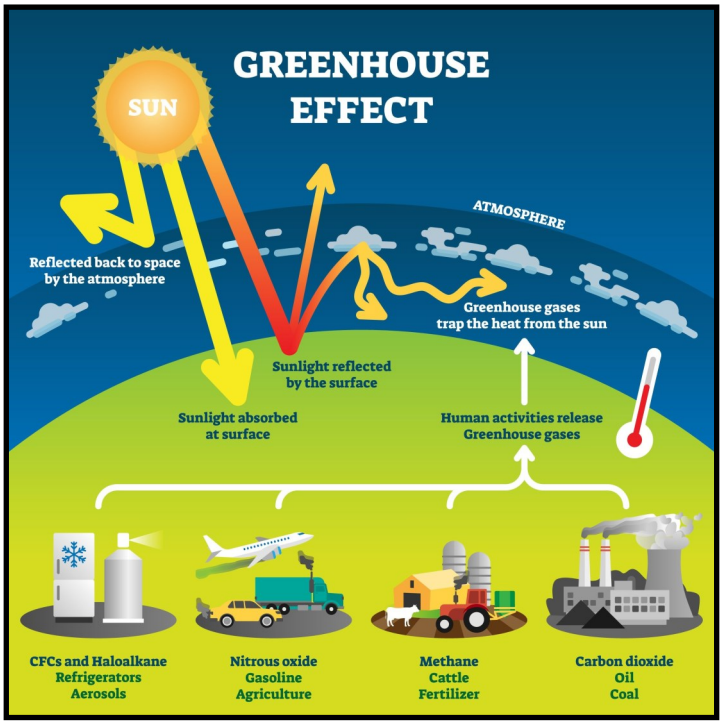
Climate Change — Knowledge for a greener future

What is climate change ? Is it different from global warming?



The terms climate change and global warming are often used interchangeably; however, climate change broadly refers to consistent changes in average weather while global warming is a rise in the Earth's average global temperature annually. The climate change that we are currently experiencing, however, is largely attributed to human activity. Climate scientists have concluded that over the last 50 years, the Earth's surface should have been cooling slightly based on natural factors, like solar intensity and volcanic activity; instead, the burning of fossil fuels has contributed to global warming at an increased rate.[1]

With the growing risks of climate change, DoD must consider climate change across all relevant strategies, plans, policy, and capabilities. To address the concerns with a changing climate, DoD has developed a Climate Resilience Portal at https://www.climate.mil/.



What are greenhouse gases?

Certain gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, trap the sun's heat in Earth's atmosphere. These greenhouse gases (GHGs) exist naturally in the atmosphere and help keep the Earth's surface warm enough to sustain life. Without greenhouse gases, the average temperature on Earth is estimated to be 0 degrees Fahrenheit, instead of today's roughly 58.3 degrees Fahrenheit.[1]

Human activities, notably the burning of fossil fuels (i.e., coal, natural gas, and oil) used to power vehicles, factories, and homes, release carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Activities, including deforestation and raising livestock also cause greenhouse gases emissions. Higher concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere trap more heat on Earth, and attribute to higher average global temperatures.

What is a carbon footprint, and how can I reduce my carbon footprint? The term "carbon footprint" has gained incredible traction over the past couple of years. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines carbon footprint as the total amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere each year by a person, family, building, organization, or company. A carbon footprint for your household can be calculated or estimated using a tool developed by the EPA (https://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/).

Reducing or offsetting greenhouse gas emissions by improving energy efficiency, using renewable energy, and adopting sustainable practices is the best way to reduce one's carbon footprint.

[1]Reference: https://www.epa.gov/climate-research

How You Can Help

- Turn down the thermostat 1-2 degrees and wear warmer clothes in your house during the winter. Open windows and turn off HVAC system in the spring.
- Switch lightbulbs to LEDs
- Drive less– walk, carpool, or use public transportation
- Buy merchandise locally to reduce the need for packaging and transport
- Use reuseable containers and bags to reduce GHGs produced during the manufacturing processes.
- Become Climate resilient– anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to changing conditions.

Prepared by DLA Installation Management for Distribution Environmental Division