

AIR QUALITY INDEX

Air Quality Index; a yardstick to measure local air quality and how air quality affects how you live and breathe.

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What is the AQI?

The AQI is a guide for reporting daily air quality. It tells you how clean or unhealthy your air is, and what associated health effects that might be a concern. The AQI focuses on health effects you may experience within a few hours or days after breathing unhealthy air. The AQI is calculated for four major air pollutants regulated by the Clean Air Act: ground-level ozone, particle pollution, carbon monoxide, and sulfur dioxide. For each of these pollutants, EPA has established national air quality standards to protect public health.

EPA is currently reviewing the national air quality standard for nitrogen dioxide. If the standard is revised, the AQI will be revised as well.

How does the AQI work?

Think of the AQI as a yardstick that runs from 0 to 500. The higher the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution and the greater the health concern. For example, an AQI value of 40 represents good air quality with little or no potential to affect public health, while an AQI value over 280 represents air quality so hazardous that everyone may experience serious effects.

An AQI value of 100 generally corresponds to the national air quality standard for the pollutant, which is the level EPA has set to protect public health. AQI values at or below 100 are generally thought of as satisfactory. When AQI values are above 100, air quality is considered to be unhealthy at first for certain sensitive groups of people, then for everyone as AQI values increase.

Where can I find the AQI?

Checking local air quality is as easy as checking the weather. You can find the latest AQI values on the Internet, in your local media, and on many state and local telephone hotlines. You can also sign up to receive AQI forecasts by e-mail:

- **AQI on the Internet.** EPA and its federal, tribal, state, and local partners have developed an AIRNow Web site to provide the public with easy access to national air quality information. At (www.airnow.gov), you will find daily AQI forecasts and real-time AQI conditions for over 300 cities across the United States, with links to more detailed state and local air quality Web sites. AIRNow's reports are displayed as maps you can use to quickly determine if the air quality is unhealthy near you.
- **AQI via e-mail.** Sign up for EnviroFlash (www.enviroflash.info), a free service that will alert you via e-mail when air quality is forecast to be a concern in your area.
- **AQI in the media.** Many local media (e.g., television, radio, and newspapers) and some national media provide daily air quality reports, often as part of the weather forecast.

AIR QUALITY INDEX (AQI) TABLE

Air Quality Index (Numerical Value)	Meaning
Good (0-50)	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate (51-100)	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101-150)	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
Unhealthy (151-200)	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy (201-300)	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.
Hazardous (301-500)	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.

