

Understanding Air Quality Index Levels

Outdoor health and safety recommendations for individuals, families, and caregivers.



AQI
0-50
Good

Who needs to be concerned?

None

What should I do?

No limits, it's a great day to be active outside. Be aware of changing air quality.

AQI
51-100
Moderate

Who needs to be concerned?

People who are unusually sensitive to particle pollution, particularly those with asthma.

What should I do?

Unusually sensitive people: Limit time outdoors, do shorter and less intense activities, and watch for symptoms, such as coughing or shortness of breath.

Everyone else: It's a good day to be active outside.

AQI
101-150
Unhealthy for sensitive groups

Who needs to be concerned?

Sensitive groups such as people with heart or lung disease like asthma, older adults, children and teenagers.

What should I do?

Sensitive groups: Limit time outdoors, do shorter and less intense activities, take more breaks, and watch for symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. People with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep quick-relief medicine handy. People with heart disease symptoms: Contact your health care provider if you experience heart palpitations, shortness of breath, or unusual fatigue.

Everyone else: Do shorter and less intense outdoor activities.

AQI
151-200
Unhealthy for everyone

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Sensitive groups: Limit time outdoors, do shorter and less intense activities, take more breaks, and watch for symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath.

Everyone else: Limit time outdoors, do shorter and less intense activities, and take more breaks during all outdoor activities.

AQI
201-300
Very unhealthy for everyone

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Sensitive groups and people with health issues: Stay indoors or seek indoor shelter. Avoid all physical activity outdoors.

Everyone else: Stay indoors if possible. When outdoors, consider wearing an N95 mask to filter fine particle pollution (PM2.5), do shorter and less intense activities, and take more breaks.

AQI
301-500
Hazardous for everyone

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Sensitive groups and people with health issues: Stay indoors or seek indoor shelter. Avoid all physical activity outdoors.

Everyone else: Stay indoors if possible. When outdoors, consider wearing an N95 mask to filter fine particle pollution (PM2.5), do shorter and less intense activities, and take more breaks.



For current air quality conditions, scan the QR code for the [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\) air quality map](https://www.dnr.wisconsin.gov/airquality) or visit airquality.wi.gov.

Note: Masks cannot filter ground-level ozone pollution, only particulate matter (PM2.5).

Understanding Air Quality Index Levels

Outdoor health and safety recommendations for schools, school sports, child care, and day camps.



AQI
0-50
Good

AQI
51-100
Moderate

AQI
101-150
Unhealthy for
sensitive groups

AQI
151-200
Unhealthy for
everyone

AQI
201-300
Very unhealthy
for everyone

AQI
301-500
Hazardous for
everyone

Who needs to be concerned?

No one

What should I do?

No limits, it's a great day to be active outside. Be aware of changing air quality.

Who needs to be concerned?

Children who are unusually sensitive to particle pollution, particularly those with asthma.

What should I do?

Unusually sensitive people:

Consider making outdoor activities shorter or choose less intense activities. Monitor children and teens for symptoms, such as coughing or shortness of breath. Ensure students with asthma follow their asthma action plans and medically manage their condition according to their plan. Monitor the AQI forecasts.

Everyone else:

It's a good day to be active outside.

Who needs to be concerned?

Sensitive groups such as babies, children, and teenagers, especially those with heart or lung diseases like asthma.

What should I do?

Sensitive groups:

Make indoor space (with air filtration) available and/or make indoor activity options available. Children with asthma should follow asthma action plans and medically manage their condition.

Everyone else:

All children should do shorter and less intense activities to lower breathing rates, and watch for symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. For longer activities increase rest periods and substitutions to lower athletes' breathing rates.

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Consider moving all activities to an indoors location with air filtration. Limit outdoor activities for all students, children and teens. Watch students for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath. Students with asthma should follow asthma action plans, stay indoors and have their medicines with them or a designated adult.

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Cancel all outdoor activities. Move all activities indoors and substitute with shorter, less intense options. Any outdoor sports practices or events should be rescheduled, moved indoors to a space with air filtration, or canceled. When outdoors, consider wearing an N95 mask to filter fine particle pollution (PM2.5).

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Cancel all outdoors activities. Reschedule or cancel any outdoor sports practices or events. Indoor activities should be kept at low intensity and frequency, especially for students with asthma. Avoid outdoor air exposure until air quality has returned to safer levels. If people cannot avoid outdoor air exposure, an N95 mask may be helpful to filter fine particles (PM2.5) when outdoors.



For current air quality conditions, visit the [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\) air quality map](https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/resources/airquality) by scanning the QR code or visit airquality.wi.gov.

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Understanding Air Quality Index Levels

Outdoor health and safety recommendations for outdoor event planners.



**AQI
0-50**
Good

**AQI
51-100**
Moderate

**AQI
101-150**
Unhealthy for
sensitive groups

**AQI
151-200**
Unhealthy for
everyone

**AQI
201-300**
Very unhealthy
for everyone

**AQI
301-500**
Hazardous for
everyone

Who needs to be concerned?

No one

What should I do?

No limits, it's a great day to be active outside. Be aware of changing air quality.

Who needs to be concerned?

People who are unusually sensitive to particle pollution, particularly those with asthma.

What should I do?

Follow your event preparedness and response plan protocols. Monitor the Air Quality Index (AQI) forecasts. Continue with event as planned. Consider encouraging event participants to monitor air quality conditions. Be aware that unusually sensitive people should limit time outdoors, do shorter and less intense activities, and watch for symptoms, such as coughing or shortness of breath.

Who needs to be concerned?

Sensitive groups such as people with heart or lung disease like asthma, older adults, children, teenagers, and pregnant people.

What should I do?

Follow your event preparedness and response plan protocols. Regularly monitor the AQI for PM2.5 forecasts. Encourage those most at-risk to monitor air conditions and decide what activities at the event are safe for them. Consider sharing information and education with event attendees, staff, and volunteers, including to watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath.

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Follow your event preparedness and response plan protocols. If possible, try to relocate the event indoors or a location where the current AQI is safe. Provide information about the air quality to attendees and event staff. Consider sharing health educational information with event attendees and staff/volunteers so that they can determine whether to participate in the event or not. Encourage attendees to watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath.

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Follow your event preparedness and response plan protocols. Cancel, reschedule or move the event indoors. Provide educational information regarding air quality to all participants and event staff. Consider allowing programmed activities (e.g., individual performers) to withdraw from the event or reschedule individual activities. Consider providing N95 masks to attendees and staff or volunteers to filter fine particles (PM2.5).

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Follow your event preparedness and response plan protocols. Cancel, reschedule, or move the event indoors. Provide information on air quality concerns to all participants and event staff. No activities can take place outdoors. Consider providing N95 masks to attendees and staff or volunteers to filter fine particles (PM2.5).



For current air quality conditions visit the [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\) air quality map](https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/airquality) by scanning the QR code or visit airquality.wi.gov.

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Understanding Air Quality Index Levels

Outdoor health and safety recommendations for outdoor workers.



AQI
0-50
Good

AQI
51-100
Moderate

AQI
101-150
Unhealthy for
sensitive groups

AQI
151-200
Unhealthy for
everyone

AQI
201-300
Very unhealthy
for everyone

AQI
301-500
Hazardous for
everyone

Who needs to be concerned?

No one

What should I do?

It's a good day to be outside. Continue follow Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) recommendations for rest and relief. Be aware of local air quality around the work zone.

Who needs to be concerned?

People who are unusually sensitive to particle pollution, particularly those with asthma.

What should I do?

Unusually sensitive people: Monitor the AQI for PM2.5 and ozone forecasts. Consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion, particularly for people who may be unusually sensitive. Encourage employees and managers to watch for symptoms, such as coughing or shortness of breath. These are signs to take it easier.

Everyone else: It's a good day to be active outside.

Who needs to be concerned?

Sensitive groups such as people with heart or lung disease like asthma, older adults, teenagers, and pregnant people.

What should I do?

Regularly monitor the AQI forecasts and alert employees when levels reach 101 or above.

Sensitive groups:

Consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion. People with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep quick-relief medicine handy.

Everyone else:

Watch for symptoms, such as coughing or shortness of breath. For PM2.5 employers can provide N95 masks to employees who request them as long as they do not interfere with other safety equipment.

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

If possible, relocate work to a location where the current AQI value for PM2.5 is lower, change work schedules, and/or reduce work intensity. If workers must be outdoors, offer breaks as necessary in enclosed buildings, structures or vehicles where the air is effectively filtered. For fine particle pollution (PM2.5), employers should provide filtering facepiece respirators, such as N95 masks, to employees who request them as long as the respirators do not interfere with other safety equipment.

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Cancel, reschedule, and/or move work indoors. If workers must be outdoors, offer breaks in enclosed buildings, structures, or vehicles where the air is effectively filtered. Provide respirators to all workers for mandatory use consistent with the employer's respiratory protection program. For fine particle pollution (PM2.5), employers should provide N95 masks, to employees who request them as long as the respirators do not interfere with other safety

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Cancel, reschedule and/or move work indoors. If workers must be outdoors, offer breaks as necessary in enclosed buildings, structures, or vehicles where the air is effectively filtered. When canceling work is not an option, provide respirators to all workers for mandatory use consistent with the employer's respiratory protection program.



For current air quality conditions visit the [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\) air quality map](https://www.wisconsin.gov/dnr/air-quality) by scanning the QR code or visit airquality.wi.gov.

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Understanding Air Quality Index Levels

Outdoor health and safety recommendations for recreational and educational camps.



AQI
0-50
Good

AQI
51-100
Moderate

AQI
101-150
Unhealthy for
sensitive groups

AQI
151-200
Unhealthy for
everyone

AQI
201-300
Very unhealthy
for everyone

AQI
301-500
Hazardous for
everyone

Who needs to be concerned?

No one

What should I do?

No limits, it's a great day to be active outside. Be aware of changing air quality.

Who needs to be concerned?

Children and teens who are unusually sensitive to particle pollution, particularly those with asthma.

What should I do?

Unusually sensitive people:

Monitor the AQI for PM2.5 and ozone forecasts. Consider making outdoor activities shorter or choose less intense activities. Monitor children and teens for symptoms, such as coughing or shortness of breath. Ensure campers with asthma are following their asthma action plans and medically managing their condition in consultation with the camp nurse or independently with parental permission.

Everyone else:

It's a good day to be active outside.

Who needs to be concerned?

Sensitive groups such as children, teenagers, and people with asthma, heart or lung diseases.

What should I do?

Limit outdoor activities for all campers. Substitute outdoor activities for shorter, less intense ones and increase rests. Consider moving all activities to an indoor location with air filtration if available. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath. Anyone who reports these symptoms should move indoors to a space with air filtration. Children with asthma should follow asthma action plans and have their quick-relief medicines with them or the supervising camp staff.

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Limit outdoor activities everyone. Substitute outdoor activities for shorter, less intense ones and increase rests to lower breathing rates. Consider moving all activities to an indoor location with air filtration if available. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath. Anyone who reports these symptoms should move indoors to a space with air filtration. Children with asthma should follow asthma action plans and have their quick-relief medicines with them or the supervising camp staff.

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Consider moving camp to an indoor location with air filtration. Monitor campers with symptoms, especially those with asthma or other heart and lung conditions. Consider canceling camp if possible. Cancel all outdoor activities. Stay indoors whenever possible. When outdoors, consider wearing an N95 mask to filter fine particle pollution (PM2.5).

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Cancel all outdoor activities. Avoid outdoor air exposure until air quality has returned to safer levels. Remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Follow tips for sealing windows and doors to keep particles from seeping indoors. If people cannot avoid outdoor air exposure, an N95 mask may be helpful to filter fine particles (PM2.5) when outdoors.



For current air quality conditions visit the [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\) air quality map](https://www.dnr.wisconsin.gov/airquality) by scanning the QR code or visit airquality.wi.gov.

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Understanding Air Quality Index Levels

Outdoor health and safety recommendations for Tribal and local governments and health departments.



AQI
0-50
Good

AQI
51-100
Moderate

AQI
101-150
Unhealthy for
sensitive groups

AQI
151-200
Unhealthy for
everyone

AQI
201-300
Very unhealthy
for everyone

AQI
301-500
Hazardous for
everyone

Who needs to be concerned?

No one

What should I do?

No limits, it's a great day to be active outside. Be aware of changing air quality.

Who needs to be concerned?

People who are unusually sensitive to particle pollution, particularly those with asthma.

What should I do?

Unusually sensitive people: limit time outdoors, do shorter and less intense activities, and watch for symptoms, such as coughing or shortness of breath.

Everyone else: It's a good day to be active outside.

Who needs to be concerned?

Sensitive groups such as people with heart or lung disease like asthma, older adults, children and teenagers

What should I do?

Sensitive groups should limit time outdoors, do shorter and less intense activities, take more breaks, and watch for symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. People with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep quick-relief medicine handy. People with heart disease symptoms: Contact your health care provider if you experience heart palpitations, shortness of breath, or unusual fatigue.

Everyone else: Do shorter and less intense outdoor activities.

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Sensitive groups: Limit time outdoors, do shorter and less intense activities, take more breaks, and watch for symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath.

Everyone else: Limit time outdoors, do shorter and less intense activities, and take more breaks during all outdoor activities.

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Sensitive groups and people with health issues: Stay indoors or seek indoor shelter. Avoid all physical activity outdoors.

Everyone else: Stay indoors if possible. When outdoors, consider wearing an N95 mask to filter fine particle pollution (PM2.5), do shorter and less intense activities, and take more breaks.

Who needs to be concerned?

Everyone, the AQI is very unhealthy for all people.

What should I do?

Avoid outdoor air exposure until air quality has returned to safer levels. Remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Follow tips for sealing windows and doors to keep particles from seeping indoors. If people cannot avoid outdoor air exposure, an N95 mask may be helpful to filter fine particles (PM2.5) when outdoors.



For current air quality conditions visit the [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\) air quality map](https://airquality.wi.gov) by scanning the QR code or visit airquality.wi.gov.

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How to use the air quality outdoor activity table

The purpose of this table is to provide decision-makers with suggested actions they can take when outdoor air is unsafe to breathe. To use the table:

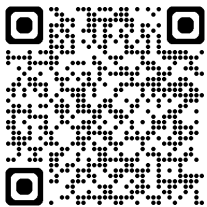
Step 1: Check the air quality using the [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource \(DNR\) air quality monitoring webpage](https://airquality.wi.gov/) (airquality.wi.gov). When planning for the future, you can check the air quality forecast for the week by selecting "Forecast" from the navigation.

Step 2: If the air quality index (AQI) is above 50, reference the table to see who should be concerned, and find out next steps for sensitive groups and the general population.

Step 3: Learn more about air quality and how to stay safe outside when AQI levels are elevated by visiting the [DHS Outdoor Air Quality and Health webpage](https://dhs.wi.gov/climate/air.htm) (dhs.wi.gov/climate/air.htm).

Tip: Stay in the loop on current air quality by [signing up to receive DNR air quality notices](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDNR/subscriber/new?topic_id=WIDNR_323) (public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDNR/subscriber/new?topic_id=WIDNR_323).

Other outdoor air quality resources



To learn more about air quality, how it impacts our health, and other resources scan the QR code for the [DHS Outdoor Air Quality and Health webpage](https://dhs.wi.gov/climate/air.htm) or visit dhs.wi.gov/climate/air.htm

Additional air quality information

Particulate matter (PM2.5) is made up of solid or liquid particles that float in the air. These particles may include dust, dirt, soot, smoke, drops of liquid, and other contaminants. Some particles are big enough to see—like smoke in the air—and others cannot be seen in the air. Breathing in particle pollution of any size can harm your health. Larger particles can irritate your eyes, nose, and throat. Tiny particles, called PM2.5, are more dangerous because they can get into deep parts of your lungs and even your bloodstream.

Ground-level ozone most often affects counties on and near Lake Michigan in summer. Like PM2.5, it can harm everyone's heart and lungs and impair breathing for people with lung diseases like asthma. No disposable masks or reusable respirators are currently certified by the National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety to filter ozone pollution.

Equity considerations are important when responding to an unsafe air quality event. Consider how certain people feel adverse health impacts more than others. Local government and decision-makers should identify strategies to support people most at risk of illness and those who are unable to avoid outside activity or do not have access to indoor shelter through outreach, prevention, and intervention activities. These groups of people include those working outdoors, experiencing homelessness, waiting for public transit, or athletes.

Some masks can reduce exposure to air pollution when pollution levels are unhealthy. If staying indoors is not an option, masks that filter out fine particles (PM2.5) before you breathe them in can be helpful when outdoors. N95 masks (sometimes called respirators) and other masks rated for filtering out fine particles are recommended. Surgical and cloth masks do not provide the same amount of protection from PM2.5 exposure. No masks or respirators are certified to filter ground-level ozone.

