



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE,
July 31, 2025

Contact:
Kim Biggs (Illinois EPA) 217-558-1536
Jim Leach (IDPH) 217-785-9209

Red Air Pollution Action Day called for Multiple Illinois Sectors

Air Quality Forecasts Downgraded due to Wildfire Smoke in the Region

CHICAGO – The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) are urging residents to use caution when outdoors because of unhealthy air quality. According to the national Air Quality Index (AQI), air quality values for particulate matter, also known as particle pollution, in multiple Illinois Sectors are higher than anticipated due to impacts from Canadian wildfire smoke, triggering a Red Air Pollution Action Day. The Red Air Pollution Action Day applies to the following Illinois counties: Jo Daviess, Stephenson, Carroll, Whiteside, Rock Island, Mercer, Henry, Bureau, Putnam, Henderson, Warren, Hancock, McDonough, Knox, Stark, Marshall, Peoria, Woodford, Fulton, Tazewell, Winnebago, Boone, Ogle, De Kalb, Lee, La Salle, McHenry, Lake, Kane, DuPage, Cook, Kendall, Will, and Grundy. Additionally, Illinois is downgrading air quality forecasts for Bloomington and Normal (McLean County) from Moderate (Yellow) to Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (Orange).

- Canadian wildfire smoke is impacting much of Illinois as of Thursday, July 31, 2025.
- All sectors in Northern Illinois and Peoria have been downgraded to an Unhealthy (Red) AQI forecast for Thursday for the [AirNow AQI Forecast Sectors](#) of Rock Island, Peoria, Rockford, Lake County, Chicago, North & West Suburbs, South & West Suburbs, Will County, and Aurora-Elgin.
- The Normal Sector has been downgraded to Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (Orange) AQI for Thursday.
- [AirNow NowCast AQI](#) may show Red or “Unhealthy” or higher levels to indicate higher hourly periods.
- The daily AQI for Friday is currently forecasted to be in the USG (Orange) or Moderate (Yellow) category for most Illinois sectors; however, Illinois EPA will update the forecasts Thursday afternoon based on current conditions and air quality modeling.
- Residents are encouraged to monitor local air quality and air quality forecasts using the latest information on [AirNow.gov](#).

- more -

Particulate matter can cause serious health problems, including asthma attacks, heart attacks, strokes, and early death. Those most at risk are people with respiratory or pulmonary disorders, as well as children and adults who are active outdoors. Individuals with sensitive health conditions should follow their doctor's advice. Some symptoms to look out for include wheezing, coughing, a rapid heartbeat, tiredness, chest pain, and shortness of breath. If symptoms worsen, call your physician or 911.

All residents should keep cool and limit physical activity outdoors when air quality is low. Illinois Department of Public Health encourages residents to take the following actions to protect themselves when air quality is Red or "Unhealthy" AQI category:

- Stay indoors and monitor your breathing, especially if you have heart or lung disease, and keep windows and doors closed.
- If your air conditioner has a fresh air intake, set your system to recirculate or close the intake.
- Use high-efficiency filters in air conditioning systems and portable air cleaners.
- Avoid activities that create more particulate matter indoors, like smoking or burning candles.
- If you cannot avoid working or other outdoor activities, choose shorter or less intense activities, consider rescheduling, and take more frequent breaks.
- Consider wearing a high-quality N-95 or N-100 mask while outdoors.

Because air quality can change from day to day, the Illinois EPA provides daily air quality forecasts based on the Air Quality Index (AQI) for fourteen sectors throughout Illinois. The AQI is a color-coded system that classifies air quality from Good (Green) to Hazardous (Maroon). Air quality forecasts are available at www.airnow.gov. Residents are also encouraged to subscribe to receive FREE air quality forecasts via email or Twitter at <http://illinois.enviroflash.info>.

###