



NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: KIM BIGGS • 217-558-1536 • KIM.BIGGS@ILLINOIS.GOV

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kim Biggs, Illinois EPA
217-558-1536
kim.biggs@illinois.gov

Chicago Area Air Pollution Action Day Issued for May 27th *Ground-Level Ozone is Expected to Impact Area*

Chicago – The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has issued an Air Pollution Action Day for the Chicago Metropolitan area for Wednesday, May 27 due to elevated ozone pollution. The Action Day includes the counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Grundy, Lake, McHenry and Will. Regional air quality is expected to reach the “Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups” (USG)/Orange category on the national [Air Quality Index](#) (AQI) today, May 26th, and is expected to extend into tomorrow, May 27th. This is the first Action Day issued by Illinois EPA for 2026.

Hourly [NowCast](#) AQI readings may show higher categories than what is forecast to help identify periods of higher 1-hour ozone. Those with air quality concerns can check current NowCast readings or sign up for [EnviroFlash](#) alerts on [AirNow.gov](#).

In Illinois, a Chicago Air Pollution Action Day is issued when air quality is forecasted to be at or above the USG/Orange category for two or more consecutive days for Chicago Metropolitan area. Elevated ozone levels are expected to continue impact the area with 8-hour AQI forecast for ozone at the USG/Orange level on May 26th and 27th, posing a potential health hazard to sensitive populations. Individuals most at risk due to elevated air pollution, including ground-level ozone and particle pollution, are those with respiratory or pulmonary disorders, as well as children and adults who are active outdoors. Sensitive individuals should follow their doctor’s advice. Some symptoms to look out for include wheezing, coughing, a fast heartbeat, fatigue, chest pain, and shortness of breath. If symptoms worsen, you should call your physician or 911.

The Illinois EPA issues daily air quality forecasts, based on the AQI, for 14 sectors throughout Illinois. The AQI is a color-coded system that classifies air quality from Good (Green) to Hazardous (Maroon). All air quality forecasts are available at [AirNow.gov](#). In addition to the AirNow.gov, residents can subscribe to FREE air quality forecasts and alerts through the [EnviroFlash](#) program and download the Free AIRNow App for iPhone and Android phones: [iPhone App](#) | [Android App](#).

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Businesses and residents in the region are encouraged to take steps to reduce contributions to air pollution every day, but especially on Action Days. Actions include:

- Limit Driving – combine errands, walk, or bike if possible.
- If you must drive, avoid idling, consolidate errands, and keep your vehicle and other engines properly tuned.
- Conserve energy to reduce energy demands.
- Use environmentally friendly household and cleaning products.
- Avoid using gasoline-powered equipment like lawnmowers and leaf blowers on Air Pollution Action Days.
- Notify colleagues, friends, and family to help protect their health and encourage actions.

Additional information on air quality and Air Pollution Action Days in Illinois is available at:
<https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/air-quality/outdoor-air.html>.

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