

# Louisiana's Air Quality and Your Health



## Who is affected by air quality?

Everyone! When air quality is good, everyone can breathe the air without any risk to their health. When air quality is measured to be “very unhealthy” or “hazardous”, even healthy people can experience negative health effects and should limit the time they spend outside. Active children and adults, or those with respiratory diseases, like asthma, are more sensitive to changes in air quality and could be most affected by changes in air quality. Ozone and particulates are two types of air pollution that can affect your health.

## What are particulates?

Particulates or particle pollution are tiny mixtures that are in the air. This type of pollution can be made up of mixtures of different solid and liquid materials including acids, metals, organic chemicals, soil, pollen and other allergens.

## Can particulates affect your health?

Yes. Local air quality affects how you live and breathe. Particulates can cause health problems because they can get into your lung tissue, and possibly into your bloodstream.

## What is ozone?

Ground level or "bad" ozone is not released directly into the air, but is created by chemical reactions in the presence of sunlight. Ozone pollution is more likely to form during warmer months. This is when the weather conditions normally needed to form ground-level ozone—lots of sun—occur.

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency . Ozone and Your Health. February 2009. <http://www.epa.gov/airnow/ozone-c.pdf>

## What is the air quality index?

The Air Quality Index, or AQI, is a measure of actual levels of pollutants in the air you breathe. It is measured on a scale going from 0-500. Lower scores mean better air quality and less pollution, while higher scores mean that there is more pollution in the air. The air quality scores are broken down into easy to understand color-coded categories. Green indicates that the air quality is good, and purple or maroon indicate that the air quality is unhealthy or hazardous to breathe.

## Air Quality Index

Air Quality Index (AQI) Values	Levels of Health Concern	Colors
<i>When the AQI is in this range:</i>	<i>...air quality conditions are:</i>	<i>...as symbolized by this color:</i>
0 to 50	Good	Green
51 to 100	Moderate	Yellow
101 to 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Orange
151 to 200	Unhealthy	Red
201 to 300	Very Unhealthy	Purple
301 to 500	Hazardous	Maroon

Source: AirNow. Air Quality Index (AQI) – A Guide to Air Quality and Your Health. May 17, 2013. <http://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=aqibasics.aqi>

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## When is air quality unhealthy for sensitive groups?

When AQI values are between 101 and 150, members of sensitive groups may experience health effects, but the general public is unlikely to be affected. When AQI values are 151 or higher, the air is unhealthy for everyone, and sensitive groups may experience more serious effects

### Particle pollution:

People that are most sensitive to particle pollution are those individuals with heart or lung disease – including coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, and asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) - older adults and children.

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Particle Pollution and Your Health. September 2003.  
<http://www.epa.gov/airnow/particle/pm-color.pdf>

## Where can I find the Air Quality Forecast for where I live?

### Online

The Air Quality Forecast can be found online at [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov). Just enter your zip code to find your local forecast. Remember, those who are active, have young children, or have a respiratory disease like asthma, may want to check the air quality forecast more often. You can also find the Air Quality Forecast on the website of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, [www.airquality.deq.louisiana.gov](http://www.airquality.deq.louisiana.gov).

### E-mail

Sign up to get AQI updates at EnviroFlash ([www.enviroflash.info](http://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.

### On Your Phone

Check the AQI right from your smartphone with AirNow App available for Android and iPhone!

### Visit our Website:

[www.srp.lsu.edu](http://www.srp.lsu.edu)

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## Where can I learn more?

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

[www.deq.louisiana.gov](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov)

Natural Resource Defense Council. Particle Pollution.

[www.nrdc.org/greengate/air/particled.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/greengate/air/particled.asp)

United States Environmental Protection Agency. AirNow.

[www.epa.gov/airnow](http://www.epa.gov/airnow)

United States Environmental Protection Agency. Actions You Can Take. [www.epa.gov/oar/oaqps/gooduphigh/actions.html](http://www.epa.gov/oar/oaqps/gooduphigh/actions.html)