

## Be smoke ready this summer: Check the Air Quality Index

BISMARCK, N.D. – As summer brings higher temperatures, increased wildfire activity, and the potential for wildfire smoke, the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality urges residents to monitor the Air Quality Index (AQI) to protect their health—especially those with respiratory conditions, older adults, young children and other sensitive groups.

The department continuously monitors air quality through a statewide network of sampling stations. This real-time data is shared with the national ambient air monitoring system and is available on [AirNow.gov](https://airnow.gov). Residents are encouraged to use the AirNow.gov website and mobile app to access the current air quality conditions and receive personalized, location-based guidance. While the NDDEQ issues news releases for specific smoke events, conditions vary over time and location. AirNow provides reliable, up-to-the-minute information 24/7.

### If you see or smell smoke, ways to protect your health include:

- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed.
- Limit or avoid strenuous outdoor activity.
- Set air conditioners or vehicle vents to recirculate indoor air.

Health impacts can vary depending on AQI levels and individual health status. Sensitive individuals may experience symptoms even when AQI levels are considered “moderate.” If air quality reaches the “unhealthy for sensitive groups” or “unhealthy” categories, consider staying indoors and rescheduling outdoor activities. Anyone experiencing difficulty breathing should seek medical attention.

### Understanding the Air Quality Index (AQI)

The AQI is a color-coded tool that helps you understand what the air quality means for your health. Here's a quick reference:

Daily AQI Color	Levels of Concern	Values of Index	Description of Air Quality
Green	Good	0 to 50	Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Yellow	Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Orange	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.
Red	Unhealthy	151 to 200	Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Purple	Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.
Maroon	Hazardous	301 and higher	Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.

## Stay Informed and Empowered

Because wildfire smoke and air quality can change rapidly due to shifting winds and active fire behavior, residents are encouraged to stay informed and make decisions based on up-to-date data and their own health status.

For those participating in outdoor events, practices or other activities, contact your local event administrators regarding decisions about cancellations or rescheduling.

## Resources

- Air Quality Index & Map: [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov)
- Real-time Fire and Smoke Map: [fire.airnow.gov](http://fire.airnow.gov)
- North Dakota Air Monitoring Data: [deg.nd.gov/AQ/monitoring](http://deg.nd.gov/AQ/monitoring)
- National Weather Forecast for ND: [graphical.weather.gov](http://graphical.weather.gov) – ND
- Wildfire Smoke Forecasts: [firesmoke.ca](http://firesmoke.ca)

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### For more information, contact:

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