



Air Alert and Air Quality Index Information Sheet

Air Alerts are based on air quality forecasts currently provided by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). They are issued by 3 p.m. for the next day, or two to three days in advance for weekends and holidays.

Here's an example of what an air alert might look like. "Tomorrow the Middle Tennessee area will be under an Air Alert, the Air Quality Index is forecasted to be Code Orange – 'Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups'."

If you would like to receive local air quality forecasts by e-mail or text message, you can subscribe to the EnviroFlash program through our web site www.CleanAirPartnership.info.

The EPA developed the Air Quality Index (AQI) to report levels of ozone, particulate matter, and other common air pollutants all on the same scale. An AQI reading of 101 corresponds to a level that is above the national health based air quality standard—the higher the AQI rating, the greater the health impact. The AQI is divided into color-coded categories. Each category is identified by a simple descriptor that conveys information about how air quality within each category relates to public health. Each category corresponds to a different level of health concern. The table below defines each of the AQI categories including the six levels of health concern and what they mean.

| AQI Numbers | AQI Category (Descriptor) | AQI Color |
|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 0 - 50 | Good | Green |
| 51 - 100 | Moderate | Yellow |
| 101 - 150 | Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups | Orange |
| 151 - 200 | Unhealthy | Red |
| 201 - 300 | Very Unhealthy | Purple |
| 301 - 500 | Hazardous | Maroon |

- **"Good"** Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
- **"Moderate"** Air quality is acceptable; however, some pollutants may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people. For example, people who are unusually sensitive to ozone may experience respiratory symptoms.
- **"Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups"** Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. For example, people with lung disease, asthma, and children who are more active and breathe more air per pound of body mass are also at a greater risk. The general public is not likely to be affected when the AQI is in this range.
- **"Unhealthy"** Everyone may begin to experience health effects. Members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
- **"Very Unhealthy"** This level triggers a health alert, meaning everyone may experience more serious health effects.
- **"Hazardous"** This level triggers health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.