

Fact Sheet

Air Quality Index Updates



San Diego County
Air Pollution
Control District

What is the Air Quality Index ?

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is the U.S. EPA's (EPA) index for reporting air quality. The tool is used to inform the public how polluted the air is based on a scale that ranges from 0 - 500, with 0 being good and 500 being hazardous pollution levels.

Updates to the AQI

- New scale reflects PM2.5 standard changes from 12 to 9.0 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) to reflect public health findings.
- Changes reflect a February 7, 2024 rule to strengthen National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for fine particle pollution.
- Changes to the AQI are effective May 6, 2024.

Q&A

Is the air quality in San Diego County getting worse?

No. EPA updated the AQI because it has learned more about the health impacts of breathing air containing particle pollution. The air quality in San Diego County has not changed, this new AQI just reflects the new PM2.5 standard changes.

Will I see more Yellow (Moderate) coded days in my community because of the AQI changes?

Many areas can expect to see more days in the Moderate category because of the changes in the AQI breakpoints.

How will it affect communities that are already disproportionately impacted by air pollution?

The change will continue to highlight that the impacts of air pollution are more serious in some communities. SDAPCD will continue to work towards improving air quality in these communities.

Where can I see a comparison chart of the AQI scale changes?

The next page has a comparison chart reflecting the changes that have been implemented to the AQI.

About SDAPCD

The San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) is the local agency charged with regulating stationary sources of air pollution and monitoring the air quality in San Diego County to meet Federal and State standards.

Contact Us

10124 Old Grove Road
San Diego, CA 92131
(858) 586-2600



sdapcd.org

2024 AQI for Fine Particle Pollution
(Breakpoints are in micrograms per cubic meter)

AQI and Index Value	Previous AQI Breakpoints	Updated AQI Breakpoints	What changed?
Good (0 – 50)	0.0 to 12.0	0.0 to 9.0	EPA updated the breakpoint between Good and Moderate to reflect the updated annual standard of 9 micrograms per cubic meter
Moderate (51 – 100)	12.1 to 35.4	9.1 to 35.4	
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101 – 150)	35.5 to 55.4	35.5 to 55.4	No change, because EPA retained the 24-hour fine PM standard of 35 micrograms per cubic meter.
Unhealthy (151 – 200)	55.5 to 150.4	55.5 to 125.4	EPA updated the breakpoints at the upper end of the unhealthy, very unhealthy, and hazardous categories based on scientific evidence about particle pollution and health. The Agency also combined two sets of breakpoints for the Hazardous category into one.
Very Unhealthy (201 – 300)	150.5 to 250.4	125.5 to 225.4	
Hazardous (301+)	250.5 to 350.4 and 350.5 to 500	225.5+	