

# New Jersey Air Quality Flag Program 2024

The NJ Air Quality Flag Program communicates outdoor air quality conditions using brightly colored flags that correspond to EPA's Air Quality Index (AQI).





# Program Overview

The NJ Air Quality Flag Program will make air quality forecasts more visible by communicating outdoor air quality conditions to the public using brightly colored flags that correspond to EPA's Air Quality Index (AQI). The flag program provides participants with materials and presentations on the AQI and the health and environmental impacts of poor air quality. The flag program increases the public's awareness of elevated levels of ozone and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) air pollution. With this information, New Jersey residents will know when to modify their activities to reduce their exposure to unhealthy air quality and avoid a potential health risk. Participants raise a colored flag each day corresponding to their local air quality forecast.

## THE PROGRAM HELPS COMMUNITIES

- ✦ Learn about air quality
- ✦ Reduce public exposure to air pollutants and associated health effects
- ✦ Inform residents when the air quality is best for outdoor exercise
- ✦ Ensure residents know actions to take when air quality levels are considered unhealthy
- ✦ Protect vulnerable populations such as those who have asthma, older adults, and/or those with heart or lung disease.

## AIR QUALITY ALERTS

The effort uses the EnviroFlash air quality email and/or text alert system to notify participants about forecasted outdoor air quality conditions and provide tips on how to protect health during unhealthy air quality days.

## PROCEDURES

- ✦ Sign-up to become a participant
- ✦ Participants will receive daily EnviroFlash e-mail or text alert
- ✦ After the forecast is received, participants fly a colored flag each day that corresponds with the air quality forecast in the EnviroFlash alert
- ✦ Based on the color of the flag and the air quality conditions, communities can adjust their level of outdoor activity and take precautions if necessary



# How to Sign Up

✓ **SIGN UP**

Sign up for the New Jersey Air Quality Flag Program at <https://dep.nj.gov/njaqflagprogram>

✓ **CHOOSE FLAG PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

Choose your flag program coordinator. The coordinator will receive the daily air quality forecast and fly the corresponding flag every day based on the AQI forecast.

✓ **DEP CONTACTS COORDINATOR**

DEP's Air Quality staff will contact the coordinator and provide instructions on how to get started.

✓ **SPREAD THE WORD**

Use outreach materials to spread the word. Help your community protect themselves from air pollution. Encourage participation. For example, encourage student volunteers to take turns to fly the flag each day. To download outreach materials, visit <https://dep.nj.gov/njaqflagprogram>.

# How to Set Up

## ✓ SIGN UP FOR ENVIROFLASH

The coordinator signs up to receive the daily air quality forecast via email and/or text through [www.enviroflash.info](http://www.enviroflash.info).

- Coordinator receives an email requesting confirmation for daily air quality forecast alerts.
- Click on the link to respond *or your address will not be added*.
- Once confirmed, the coordinator will receive the Enviroflash emails within a few days.
- The first email may go into “Junk Mail” or “Spam,” so it is important to check these folders.

## ✓ CHECK FOR AIR QUALITY FORECAST

Once the coordinator receives materials provided by DEP, check for Enviroflash air quality forecasts daily. The email is typically sent every day between 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. and contains the forecast for the current and following day.

## ✓ DISPLAY FLAG

Display the air quality flag that corresponds with the forecast sent to your email. The flag should be in a visible area, such as the school lobby or on a flagpole. Displaying the Activity Guide beside the flag is recommended.

## ✓ MODIFY OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES, IF NECESSARY

Using the guidance provided in the activity chart, determine if outside activity needs to be modified or restricted.

## ✓ SHARE AIR QUALITY FORECAST

Forward the air quality alert to parents, school groups, and community groups. Include those who are interested in protecting vulnerable populations from outdoor air pollution in your network. Also include recommendations for activity modifications that would affect the people in your network. Encourage parents to sign up for Enviroflash.



## Schools, Daycares, Summer Camps

- ✓ Announce daily air quality forecast during morning announcements.
- ✓ Post a short article in your school newsletter, website, email and/or fliers. There is a sample provided in your packet of information.
- ✓ Hold a flag raising ceremony or other event to kick off the program and to inform your students, teachers, and staff about the program!
- ✓ Use the air quality education materials and lessons available at <https://dep.nj.gov/njaqflagprogram>
- ✓ Request an education program at [www.nj.gov/dep/seeds/regform.htm](http://www.nj.gov/dep/seeds/regform.htm)

## Municipalities, Community Centers, Regulated Facilities

- ✓ Post a short article in your newsletter, website, email and/or fliers. Use the outreach materials listed on <https://dep.nj.gov/njaqflagprogram>.
- ✓ Hold a flag raising ceremony or other event to kick off the program and to inform your constituents, members, and staff about the program.

# Air Quality Guide for Ozone

Air Quality Index	Who Needs to be Concerned?	What Should I Do?
Good (0-50)		It's a great day to be active outside.
Moderate (51-100)	Some people who may be un-usually sensitive to ozone.	<p>Unusually sensitive people: Consider reducing prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath. These are signs to take it easier.</p> <p>Everyone else: It's a good day to be active outside.</p>
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101-150)	Sensitive groups include people with lung disease such as asthma, older adults, children and teenagers, and people who are active outdoors.	<p>Sensitive groups: Reduce prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Take more breaks, do less intense activities. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath. Schedule outdoor activities in the morning when ozone is lower.</p> <p>People with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep quick-relief medicine handy.</p>
Unhealthy (151-200)	Everyone	<p>Sensitive groups: Avoid prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Schedule outdoor activities in the morning when ozone is lower. Consider moving activities indoors. People with asthma, keep quick-relief medicine handy.</p> <p>Everyone else: Reduce prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Take more breaks, do less intense activities. Schedule outdoor activities in the morning when ozone is lower.</p>
Very Unhealthy (201-300)	Everyone	<p>Sensitive groups: Avoid all physical activity outdoors. Move activities indoors or reschedule to a time when air quality is better.</p> <p>People with asthma, keep quick-relief medicine handy.</p> <p>Everyone else: Avoid prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Schedule outdoor activities in the morning when ozone is lower. Consider moving activities indoors.</p>
Hazardous (301-500)	Everyone	Everyone: Avoid all physical activity outdoors.

Note: If you don't have an air conditioner, staying inside with the windows closed may be dangerous in extremely hotweather. In these cases, seek alternative shelter. [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov)

# Air Quality Guide for Particle Pollution

Air Quality Index	Who Needs to be Concerned?	What Should I Do?
Good (0-50)		It's a great day to be active outside.
Moderate (51-100)	Some people who may be unusually sensitive to particle pollution.	<p>Unusually sensitive people: Consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath. These are signs to take it easier.</p> <p>Everyone else: It's a good day to be active outside.</p>
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101-150)	Sensitive groups include people with heart or lung disease, older adults, children and teenagers.	<p>Sensitive groups: Reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. It's OK to be active outside, but take more breaks and do less intense activities. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath.</p> <p>People with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep quick relief medicine handy.</p> <p>If you have heart disease: Symptoms such as palpitations, shortness of breath, or unusual fatigue may indicate a serious problem. If you have any of these, contact your health care provider.</p>
Unhealthy (151-200)	Everyone	<p>Sensitive groups: Avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Consider moving activities indoors or rescheduling.</p> <p>Everyone else: Reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. Take more breaks during outdoor activities.</p>
Very Unhealthy (201-300)	Everyone	<p>Sensitive groups: Avoid all physical activity outdoors. Move activities indoors or reschedule to a time when air quality is better.</p> <p>Everyone else: Avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Consider moving activities indoors or rescheduling to a time when air quality is better.</p>
Hazardous (301-500)	Everyone	<p>Everyone: Avoid all physical activity outdoors.</p> <p>Sensitive groups: Remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Follow tips for keeping particle levels low indoors.</p>

# Air Quality Program Contact Information



**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**  
Bureau of Evaluation and Planning  
[NJDEP-BAQP@dep.nj.gov](mailto:NJDEP-BAQP@dep.nj.gov)

For information on air quality in New Jersey, visit [www.nj.gov/dep/airmon](http://www.nj.gov/dep/airmon)

Sign up for the New Jersey Air Quality Flag Program at  
<https://dep.nj.gov/njaqflagprogram>

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