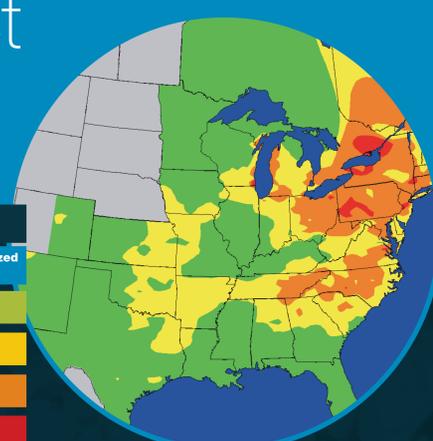




AIRNow—International

Real-Time Air Quality Data and Forecasts to Protect Global Public Health



Air Quality Index (AQI) Values	Levels of Health Concern	Colors
When the AQI is in this range:	...air quality conditions are:	...as symbolized by this 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

Air. The average adult breathes 13,000 liters each day. Yet poor air quality is an insidious problem. To better protect public health by providing real-time air quality data and forecasts, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency created the AIRNow program in 1995. Growing from a small regional program with three data polls each day, AIRNow today is a nationwide program featuring hourly data, hundreds of maps, forecasts and other vital information on air quality.

An Air Quality Index makes real-time data meaningful to the general public. As a color-coded scale that ties air quality concentrations to health effects, the Air Quality Index ranges from "good" and "moderate" to "unhealthy for sensitive groups," "unhealthy," "very unhealthy" and "hazardous." When the Air Quality Index registers "unhealthy," everyone may experience some health effects. "Hazardous" signals emergency conditions. To complement this index and help improve public health, the Environmental Protection Agency provides training, outreach and educational materials about the health implications of poor air quality.

Since many countries have expressed interest in the AIRNow system, AIRNow-International, or AirNow-I, has been developed to bring the immense experience gained in real-time data-sharing, processing and distribution

to other parts of the world. With AIRNow-I, distribution will be addressed with a version of easy-to-install AIRNow software that includes data processing, quality control, system monitoring and mapping. In addition to bringing air quality information to the public in countries that do not currently have access to this information, AIRNow-I's data-sharing capabilities can be extremely useful to the air quality research community. As different local entities begin to share air quality information, new discoveries can be made about the behavior and causes of regional air pollution.

AIRNow-I holds the promise of becoming a catalyst for world-wide integration and standardization of real-time air quality data. With agreed upon standards for sharing data, AIRNow-I can interface seamlessly with existing systems. In different countries, AIRNow-I can also become a national focal point for communicating air quality conditions, forecasts and healthy suggestions to decision-makers, the press and the public.

www.airnow.gov