

Air News

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - Air Program

July 8, 2016

New Air Quality Index for Ozone in 2016

In 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) strengthened the national air quality standard for [ozone](#) from 75 parts per billion (ppb) to 70 ppb. The revision to the standard has implications for air quality monitoring in Wisconsin during the 2016 ozone season.

The DNR reports [current air quality](#) throughout the state using U.S. EPA's Air Quality Index (AQI). The AQI for ozone was adjusted in 2016 to reflect the revised ozone standard. The current ozone standard corresponds to an AQI value of 100. The U.S. EPA considers values up to 100 as protective of human health. Under the new 2015 standard, an AQI value of 100 corresponds to an air quality ozone concentration of 70 ppb, while under the previous 2008 standard it corresponded to a concentration of 75 ppb.

The DNR issues [air quality advisories](#) when the AQI reaches, or is expected to reach, a value of 100. Even if the air quality itself has not changed, the department may issue air quality advisories more often and for a greater number of counties than in previous years, due to the more stringent standard. For this reason, a more frequent issuance of air quality advisories does not necessarily mean the air quality in any particular county is worse than previous years. In fact, air quality has been improving across the state. For more information, visit [Wisconsin's air quality trends](#).



Color coded chart showing differences between 2008 and 2015 ozone standards

AQI Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	8-hr Ozone Concentration (ppb)	
		2008 Ozone Standard	2015 Ozone Standard
Good	0-50	0-59	0-54
Moderate	51-100	60-75	55-70
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101-150	76-95	71-85
Unhealthy	151-200	96-115	86-105
Very Unhealthy	201-300	116-374	106-200
Hazardous	> 300	> 375	> 201