

# Air Quality



## Air Quality in the Yakima Valley

- Air quality can be impacted by **particulate matter (PM)** air pollution from both natural processes and human activities (see image to the right).
- Outdoor air pollution can be from wildfire smoke events, traffic, or industrial activity.
- Indoor air pollution can be from cooking, cleaning with strong chemical products, and outdoor infiltration (such as wildfire smoke).
- The EPA's **Air Quality Index (AQI)** uses colors to reflect different air quality levels and associated health impacts.
- When using **AirNow**, a publicly available website developed by the EPA, you can track your local air quality with different colors and make the best health decisions for you and your family when air quality is poor.

| AQI Basics for Ozone and Particle Pollution |                                |                 |   |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Daily AQI Color                             | Levels of Concern              | Values of Index | Description of Air Quality  |
| Green                                       | Good                           | 0 to 50         | Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.   |
| Yellow                                      | Moderate                       | 51 to 100       | Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution. |
| Orange                                      | Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups | 101 to 150      | Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.                              |
| Red   | Unhealthy                      | 151 to 200      | Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects. |
| Purple                                      | Very Unhealthy                 | 201 to 300      | Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.   |
| Maroon                                      | Hazardous                      | 301 and higher  | Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.   |



Scan for  
AirNow

## Air Pollution- What Are the Health Impacts and Ways to Reduce Exposure

### Air Pollution Health Impacts (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)

- **Fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)** is a major air pollution component and can cause serious health impacts.
- Due to its small size, it travels deep into the lungs and can go into the blood.
- Health impacts from PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposure include conditions and symptoms in the respiratory system (asthma, wheezing, cough), cardiovascular system (heart attack, stroke), eye irritation, and possible cognitive issues.

### Ways to Reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub> Health Impacts

- Keep track of your local outdoor AQI using the AQI index, especially if you're vulnerable (such as having asthma and heart conditions).
- Both commercial air purifier with High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter and DIY box fan filters are accessible and can remove indoor particle pollution effectively when indoor AQI is poor.
- To learn about your indoor AQI, low-cost sensors like **PurpleAir Touch** which changes its color to reflect indoor AQI can be useful.



PurpleAir  
Touch  
Indoor Air  
Quality  
Monitor

#### CONTACT US

Email: [cehe@uw.edu](mailto:cehe@uw.edu)  
Phone: 206-543-0608