



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Environmental Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2020

Celebrate and learn why clean air is important during Air Quality Awareness Week, May 4-8

Although Covid-19 has limited many activities, Iowans can still enjoy the outdoors—including [state parks](#)—practicing social distancing.

So Run. Hike or bike. Hunt for mushrooms. Photograph wildflowers. As temperatures warm Iowans can usually count on good air quality. Iowans especially have something to celebrate. Over the last 25 years, Iowa industries have significantly reduced six major air pollutants while growing our economy.

If your kids are learning from home during the pandemic, there are lesson plans and activities that stress the importance of good air quality and our health. Check out educational materials and activities developed by the U.S. [Environmental Protection Agency](#) and the [National Association of Clean Air Agencies](#).

And, if you want to dig into the data, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency summarizes long-term [air quality data](#) across the U.S. and, just published, the American Lung Association's [State of the Air report](#) shows Iowa has clean air.

Find out more about air quality trends in Iowa and [your neighborhood](#). Or, explore a few ways to [save money while helping everyone breathe easier](#).

While there is much to celebrate during Air Quality Awareness Week, May 4 to 8, there are days when local air quality can pose health risks to sensitive populations. If in doubt or planning outdoor activities, consult the Air Quality Index, www.iowacleanair.gov, to learn about current and local conditions.

The color-coded map summarizes ozone and particulate matter levels. In Iowa, the map is usually green for good air quality.

If pollution is high, the Air Quality Index will show orange areas, cautioning sensitive groups like the elderly, children, and those with heart or lung diseases to limit strenuous outdoor activities.

Athletes and those who love outdoor activities or work outdoors may also be affected by ozone, because the more active they are, the faster and deeper they breathe.

For information concerning current levels of particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide, check the [Polk County](#), [Linn County](#) and [State Hygienic Laboratory](#) websites:

- State Hygienic Laboratory: <http://www.shl.uiowa.edu/env/ambient/data.xml>
- Polk County: <https://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/public-works/air-quality/air-quality-monitoring/current-aqi-real-time-data/>
- Linn County: linncleanair.org/Content/Current-Air-Quality.aspx