

Air Quality and Your Community

In Nebraska, our air monitoring network is designed to assess our state's compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, or NAAQS. These standards were established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect human health and the environment, and are the "rules" with which the state must comply. The NAAQS provide standards for six pollutants that present a risk to human health and the environment.

Locations of air monitors are determined based on the purpose for the monitoring. Most monitoring networks are designed to support human health objectives, and monitors are located in established population centers. They may be near areas where pollutants are likely to be present, such as highways, city centers, or other areas of concern (large emission sources or schools). Some monitors are placed in rural areas, far from urban centers and emissions sources, to determine background levels of pollution.

Nebraska is presently in compliance (attainment) with all of the NAAQS, and has a history of consistent compliance for a number of reasons:

- Technology – improvements in methods of removing pollutants from emissions have contributed to a decrease in emissions from many industrial facilities in the state;
- Topography – we have a primarily flat landscape that allows for effective dispersion of pollutants in the air;
- Windspeed – the state average wind speed ranges between 7 and 10 meters/second (about 15-20 mph) and this helps to disperse pollutants;
- State Regulations, Air Permits, and Compliance and Enforcement – these activities work in concert to ensure regulations are implemented and enforced, and that sources of air pollution follow the regulations.

So go outside and enjoy a walk, play in the park, or relax in your own backyard. Nebraska is a great place to live, and a great place to enjoy the outdoors and take advantage of good, clean air!