



# National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) - Attainment Status

The Clean Air Act requires U.S. EPA to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment (40 CFR part 50).

**Primary standards** provide public health protection, including protecting the health of "sensitive" populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly. **Secondary standards** provide public welfare protection, including protection against decreased visibility and damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings.

U.S. EPA has set standards for six criteria air pollutants as shown in the table below. Units of measure for the standards are parts per million (ppm) by volume, parts per billion (ppb) by volume, and micrograms per cubic meter of air ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ).

Pollutant	Primary/ Secondary Standards	Averaging Time	Level	Form	Ohio Status
Carbon monoxide	primary	Eight-hour	9 ppm	Not to be exceeded more than once per year	Full Attainment
		One-hour	35 ppm		Full Attainment
<u>Lead (Pb)</u>	primary and secondary	Rolling three- month average	0.15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	Not to be exceeded	<u>Full Attainment</u>  <u>Stark county partial nonattainment</u>

<u>Nitrogen dioxide</u>		primary and secondary	One-year	53 ppb	Annual Mean	Full Attainment
		primary	One-hour	100 ppb	98th percentile of 1-hour daily maximum concentrations, averaged over three years	Full Attainment
Particulate matter	PM <sub>10</sub>	primary and secondary	24-hour	150 ug/m <sup>3</sup>	Not to be exceeded more than once per year on average over three years	Full Attainment
	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	primary	<u>One-year</u>	9.0 ug/m <sup>3</sup> (2024 Std.)	annual mean, averaged over three years	TBD
		primary	<u>One-year</u>	12.0 ug/m <sup>3</sup> (2012 Std.)	annual mean, averaged over three years	<u>Full Attainment</u>
		secondary	<u>One-year</u>	15.0 ug/m <sup>3</sup> (1997 Std.)	annual mean, averaged over three years	<u>Full Attainment</u>
		primary and secondary	<u>24-hour</u>	35 ug/m <sup>3</sup> (2006 Std.)	98th percentile, averaged over three years	<u>Full Attainment</u>
Ozone		primary and secondary	<u>Eight-hour</u>	0.070 ppm (2015 std)	Annual fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour concentration, averaged over three years	<u>Map</u>
		primary and secondary	<u>Eight-hour</u>	0.075 ppm (2008 std)	Annual fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour concentration, averaged over three years	<u>Full Attainment</u>
		primary and secondary	<u>Eight-hour</u>	0.08 ppm (1997 std)	Annual fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour concentration, averaged over three years	<u>Full Attainment</u>

Sulfur dioxide	primary	<u>One-hour</u>	75 ppb	99th percentile of one-hour daily maximum concentrations, averaged over three years	<u>Map</u>
	secondary	Three-hour	0.5 ppm	Not to be exceeded more than once per year	Full Attainment

## Attainment Status

Ohio EPA monitors the air and analyzes the data to determine compliance with air quality standards. As of January 2025, Ohio EPA has more than 250 air monitors at around 100 monitoring sites that check levels of sulfur dioxide, lead, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, and ozone as well as other non-criteria pollutants.

Ohio EPA submits data and detailed plans to U.S. EPA to demonstrate compliance and the ability to maintain compliance.

The Clean Air Act requires U.S. EPA to review air quality standards every five years to determine if they are still protective of human health and the environment.

When an area does not meet the standard, it is classified as being in nonattainment. This classification impacts businesses that want to locate or expand an air pollution source in that area. Once an area has three years of data showing that it meets the standard, the State must petition U.S. EPA to reclassify it as being in attainment.

The Clean Air Act gives U.S. EPA up to 18 months to act on a redesignation request. The area is not officially redesignated until U.S. EPA provides an opportunity for public comment and publishes the final action in the Federal Register. Only then is the area relieved of all requirements for nonattainment areas, including the requirement for new or modified facilities to obtain emissions offsets.

Ohio's attainment status can frequently change from attainment to nonattainment and vice versa because of U.S. EPA revising the air standards and promulgating new nonattainment areas, and redesignating  nonattainment areas back to attainment after air quality meets the standards. Ohio's current attainment status for each of the standards is shown in the table above.

### Do nonattainment areas affect businesses?

Yes, nonattainment can be an important consideration for businesses intending to locate or expand in a nonattainment area. However, the nonattainment new source review (NSR) requirements apply only to new major stationary sources of air pollutants, or modifications at existing major sources. A new major source in a nonattainment area is generally one that has the potential to emit more than 100 tons of air pollutants per year. In some instances, the threshold for defining a major source is 250 tons per year in attainment areas. For ozone nonattainment areas classified as serious, severe, or extreme, the respective NO<sub>x</sub>/VOC major source thresholds are 50, 25, and 10 tons per year. The threshold for a major source modification can be 40, 25, 15, or 10 tons per year, depending on the classification.

So, although an important consideration related to business location or expansion, nonattainment is generally related to large business operations that have significant emission levels, such as major manufacturing companies (for example, iron/steel, auto, paper, chemical/petroleum) and utilities.

Nonattainment is NOT applicable to any business activity that is classified as a minor source of air emissions (<100 tons per year). Companies classified as minor sources are required to obtain a permit-to-install and operate (PTIO) from Ohio EPA but are not subject to nonattainment new source review requirements and do not need to obtain emission (offset) credits, as described below.

For major sources that are subject to nonattainment new source review, the basic requirements are:

- The new/expanding company must obtain emission credits (called offset credits) from existing sources located in the vicinity of a proposed source which (1) offset the emissions increase from the new source or modification and (2) provide a net air quality benefit.
- The new/expanding company must obtain a nonattainment air permit from Ohio EPA which includes installing pollution control equipment that demonstrates the company is achieving the lowest achievable emission rate (LAER).

For every one ton of pollutants the company will emit, it must obtain more than one ton of emissions credits from a company that has reduced its emissions or is no longer operating. Credits must be obtained from a company that is in the same nonattainment area. This rule is designed to ensure that a proposed large source of air emissions will not interfere with ongoing work to bring the area into attainment.

Offset credits allow for new economic growth in nonattainment areas without negatively impacting air quality in the area over time. Ohio EPA is not involved in the transaction of purchasing or selling offset credits. This process is arranged between the business parties. Ohio EPA has an Emission Reduction Credit (ERC) Banking Program to assist facilities in obtaining emission offsets and maintains a list of companies that have voluntarily reported the availability of offset credits.



Collapse All Sections

