

Air Quality in Ireland

Report 2025



Key Messages

Air Quality Monitoring

Clean Air and Health

Air Quality in Ireland Results & Trends

The Challenge

Partnership in Action

Call to Action

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1. Air quality is good overall in Ireland

Ireland met the EU's 2025 legal air quality limits. Air quality has improved, with pollutants decreasing over the last 20 years. Continued progress will allow Ireland achieve stricter 2030 limits under the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive.

2. Air pollution causes significant health impacts

Air pollution remains Europe's greatest environmental health risk (EEA, 2026). In Ireland, despite meeting the air quality limits there are around 1,500 premature deaths a year linked to air pollution.

3. Maintain delivery of national policy actions

Government funding of infrastructure, household supports and enforcement activities which help to deliver clean air and health benefits to communities must be maintained.

4. Local authorities have a key role to play

Local Authorities must continue solid fuel enforcement, promote retrofitting and support active travel infrastructure.

5. Seasonal variabilities exist across communities

Research shows air quality is generally poorer in low-income areas, highlighting the need for targeted measures to reduce solid fuel burning dependency.

What
can we
do?

We can all help improve the quality of the air we breathe by:

- Using less solid fuel and cleaner fuels to heat our homes.
- Reducing our use of cars to go to school, work and play.

Support is available to help people make positive changes, including switching to greener options that can reduce air pollution:



Cleaner
home
heating



Walking, cycling
and public
transport



Warmer,
more energy
efficient
homes



Electric
vehicles



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Stay Informed - How we monitor air quality in Ireland

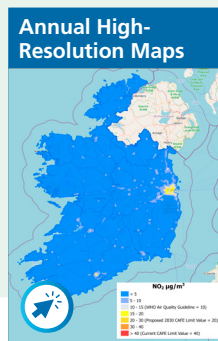
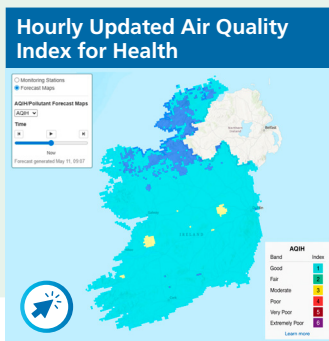
Air quality information from monitoring and mapping help assess air quality across the country and its potential impact on health.

Ireland's air quality is measured by a network of 113 monitoring stations in partnership with local authorities and other organisations.

These stations measure key pollutants such as particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and ozone (O_3).

Real-time information and health advice are available through the Air Quality Index for Health (AQIH). Stay informed about air quality in your area at www.airquality.ie

Mapping air quality is helping to accurately fill the gaps between monitoring stations and show air pollutant concentrations across Ireland.



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Healthy Air, Healthy Life

Air pollution is decreasing across Europe, but it remains a risk to our health and the environment.

In Ireland, the main air pollutants of concern are PM_{10} , $PM_{2.5}$ and NO_2 . Even small amounts can affect health.

Explore where these pollutants come from by clicking on the map of Ireland.

The Air Quality Index for Health (AQIH) provides information about the air quality in your area. It also includes health advice to help you understand how air pollution may affect you or your child. The AQIH can help inform decisions about outdoor activities when air pollution levels are high.

Pollutant
Sources in
Ireland



How clean is
the air you are
breathing?
Check out the
AQIH now



Is it
necessary?



**WILL I LIGHT
THE FIRE?**

Lighting an open fire or stove causes harmful emissions that linger in the air, harming your health and the health of your family, neighbours, and community.

Before you light that fire, ask yourself the burning question, is it really necessary?



A message from
Asthma Society
Ireland



A message
from Irish Heart
Foundation



**Irish Heart
Foundation**

Home heating options:
change the way you
heat your home



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Pollutant Sources in Ireland

Solid fuel



Particulate Matter (PM)

What is particulate matter (PM): PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}?

Particulate matter (PM) are tiny particles of solid or liquid suspended in the air. The EPA monitors PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}.

Where does it come from?

Fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) in Ireland mainly comes from the burning of solid fuels, such as coal, peat, and wood to heat our homes.

How will it impact my health?

PM_{2.5} is the more important pollutant as it causes most health issues. These tiny particles are inhaled deep into the lungs and cause damage. Chronic exposure can also contribute to stroke and heart disease.

When is it at its worst?

PM levels, in our towns, villages and cities, are at their highest during winter because of human activity, with increased burning of solid fuels using fires and stoves for heating.



Traffic

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)

What is nitrogen dioxide?

Nitrogen dioxide is a significant air pollutant (NO₂).

Where does it come from?

The main source of NO₂ in our towns, villages and cities is from traffic (petrol and diesel engines).

How will it impact my health?

NO₂ can affect our lungs and breathing.

When is it at its worst?

High concentration of NO₂ occurs in our cities, where traffic is heaviest.

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A message from the Irish Heart Foundation

Air pollution poses a real danger to the cardiovascular system, contributing to heart disease and stroke. Stroke, heart disease, dementia, lung cancer, asthma, mental health issues, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), and much more have been linked to exposure to polluted air.

There are an estimated 600,000 people in Ireland living with a cardiovascular condition. It is a generational health crisis. However, 80% of early heart disease and stroke cases is preventable through modifiable risk factors, including improved air quality. The Irish Heart Foundation is here for every heartbeat so that no more loved ones are needlessly lost.

The Irish Heart Foundation believes that the following measures could improve air quality and benefit public health, while alleviating energy poverty.

Invest in public and active transport to help society transition to more environmentally healthy and sustainable forms of travel.

Accelerate and expand the national retrofitting programme, prioritising social housing households.

Prioritise all-island air quality at the North-South ministerial conference, ensuring all-island alignment on solid fuel regulations.

Increase local authorities' resources to ensure high levels of enforcement and compliance of existing air quality legislation.

Establish a timeline for phasing out the remaining health-harming solid fuels from the market.

Improve healthcare professional capacity of air pollution and health.

Click on this link to see how the Irish Heart Foundation are campaigning for cleaner air for healthier hearts <https://irishheart.ie/advocacy/healthier-air-for-healthier-hearts/>



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A message from Asthma Society of Ireland

The Asthma Society of Ireland advocates for policies that improve air quality because of its direct impact on respiratory health.

Air pollution can both increase the risk of developing asthma and trigger symptoms and asthma attacks in those already living with the condition, with both immediate and long-term health consequences.

The Asthma Society also provides resources for healthcare professionals and people with asthma on the impact of air pollution.



Click here to access practical advice on managing asthma when air pollution or climate-related factors are a trigger, and to learn how healthcare professionals can incorporate air quality into asthma care



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Will I light the fire

WILL I LIGHT THE FIRE?

Burning solid fuels such as sod turf, wood, and coal in open fires and stoves releases harmful emissions such as particulate matter that linger in the air, **harming your health and the health of your family, neighbours, and community.**



Up to **40% of emissions** from open fires **remain in the room** and can seriously harm your health and those around you.

These emissions, when inhaled, can travel deep into your lungs and bloodstream, **damaging your heart and lungs.**



One of the most harmful air pollutants is **Particulate Matter (PM)**. In Ireland, solid fuel burning in homes **accounts for nearly half of all PM.**

Fine PM particles or PM_{2.5} are so microscopic that you could lay **40 of these particles across the width of an average human hair.**



In Ireland, **air pollution causes 1,500 premature deaths per** the majority due to PM from the burning of solid fuel burning.

Before you light that fire, ask yourself the burning question, is it really necessary?



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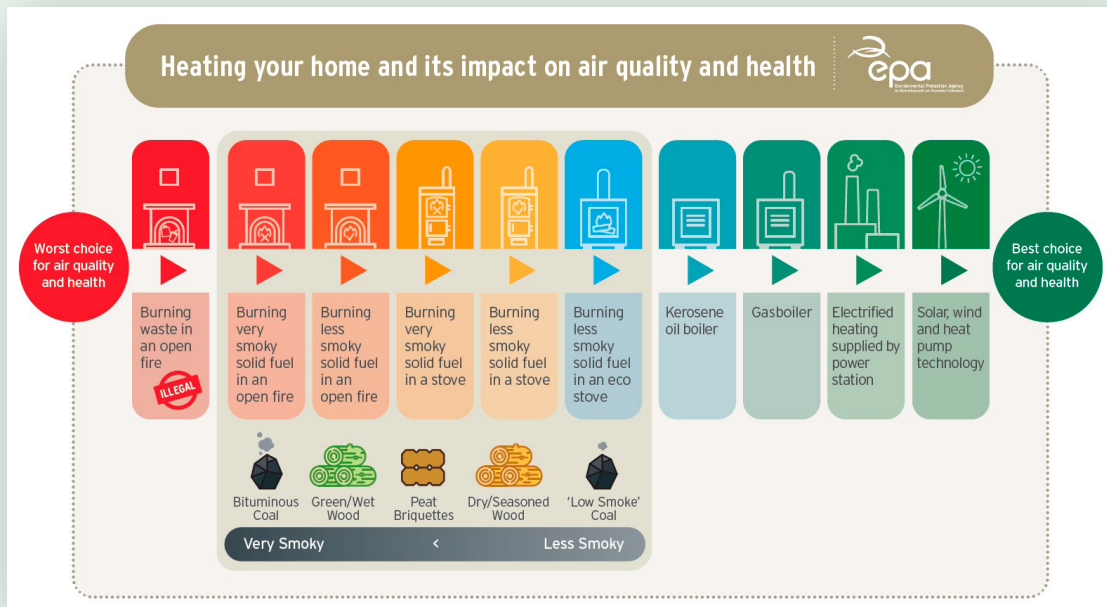
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Change how you heat your home



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Air quality is good overall in Ireland

Ireland met all EU air quality limits in 2025.

Air quality is improving, and most pollutants are showing a steady decline. Despite this progress, Ireland remains above recommendations of the World Health Organisation and the legal limits from 2030 in the revised EU Ambient Air Quality Directive.

The revised Directive will take effect in Ireland on 11 December 2026. Once it comes into force, Ireland will face tougher limits for air quality from 2030.

The EU is tightening air quality limits as part of its plan to achieve zero pollution by 2050.

The WHO says there is no completely safe level of air pollution, as even low levels can harm health over time.



**GREEN
DEAL**



**EU's ZERO
POLLUTION
VISION
2050**



**CLEAN
INDUSTRIAL
DEAL**



**AIR
QUALITY
LIMITS**

Selected pollutants measured in 2025 and their adherence to EU legal limit values (Current Ambient Air Quality Directive)

Pollutant	Number of stations where parameter monitored 2025	EU legal limit values
PM ₁₀	108	No exceedances
PM _{2.5}	104	No exceedances
NO ₂	37	No exceedances
Ozone (O ₃)	23	No exceedances
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	15	No exceedances
PAHs	5	No exceedances
Heavy metals	5	No exceedances
Dioxins	22	No exceedances
All other pollutants		No exceedances

Air Monitoring Trends

Click on each pollutant to see how air quality in Ireland has been improving over the last number of years.



**See the effects of
solid fuel burning
on the air monitoring
network.**



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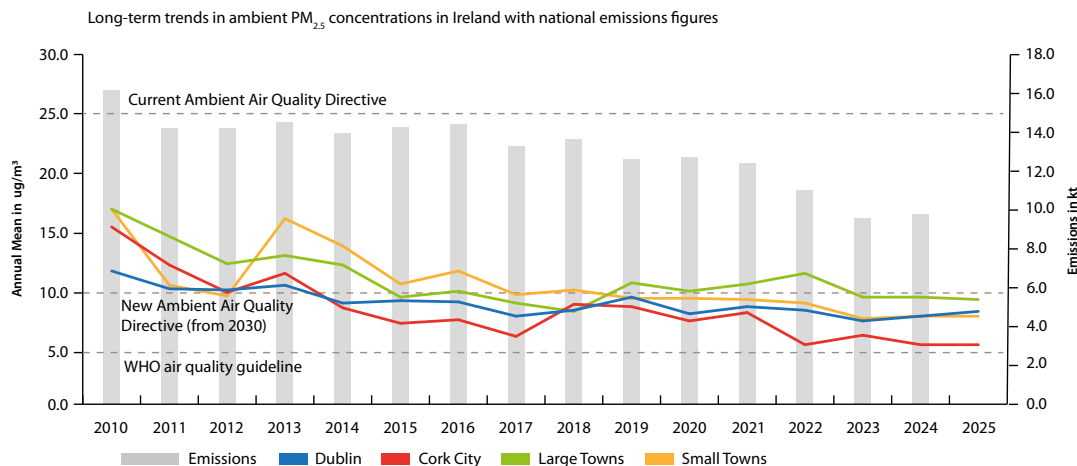
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Long-term trends in ambient PM_{2.5} concentrations in Ireland with national emissions figures



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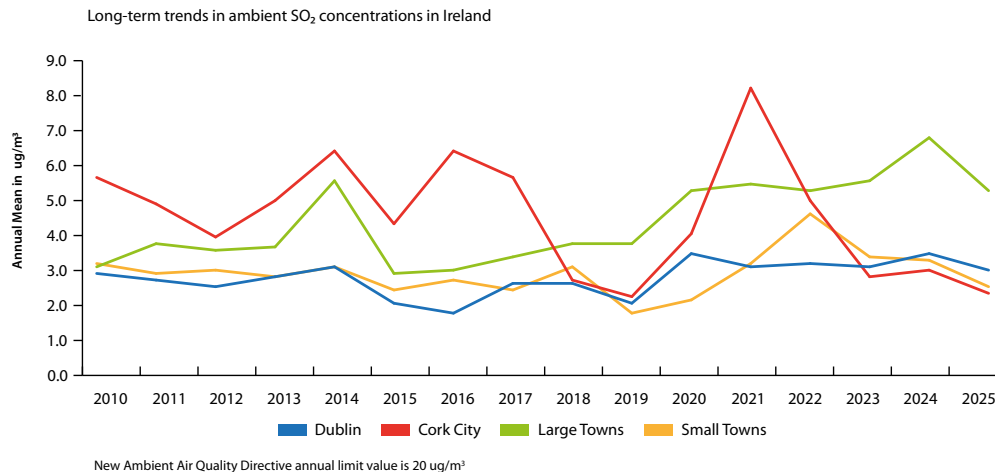
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Long-term trends in ambient SO₂ concentrations in Ireland



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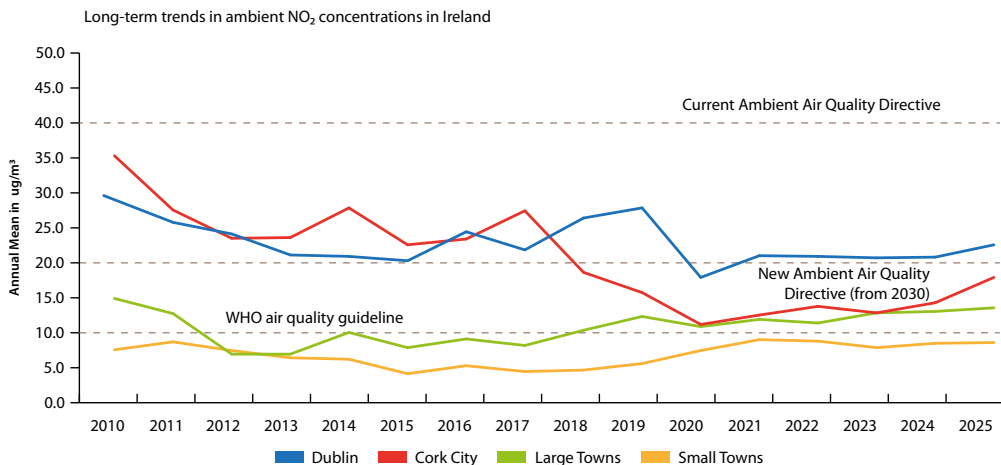
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Long-term trends in ambient NO₂ concentrations in Ireland



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The Challenge Ahead: Meeting the 2030 Limits

The Pathway to Meeting the New Ambient Air Quality Directive

Click on each section to explore the key challenges facing Ireland. This includes an assessment of whether the country is on track to meet the 2030 air quality limits, and the actions required to comply with the new legislation.

2026 New
Ambient AQ
Directive



Local
Authority
Engagement



2030
Compliance



What's
New



Information
and
Communication



Ireland's goal is to
achieve full compliance
with the EU air quality
limits from 2030

Now is
the time
to take
action!



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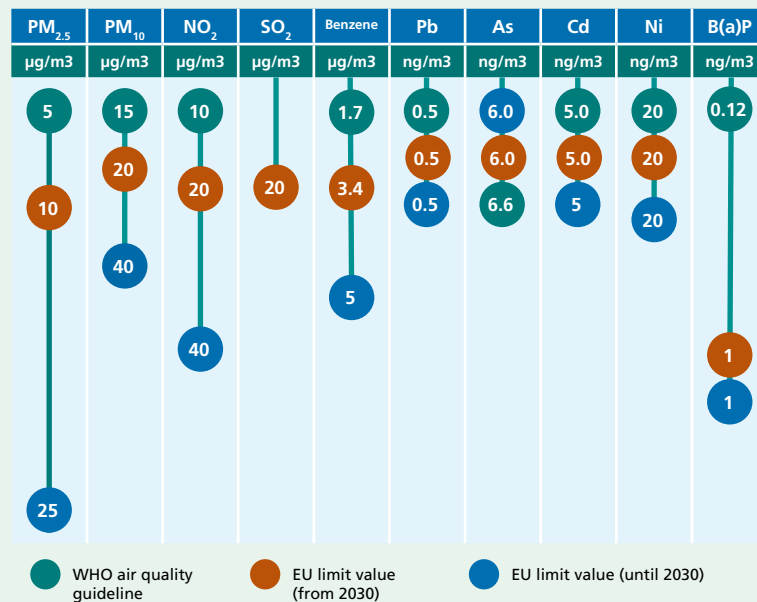
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2026 New Ambient Air Quality Directive

The EU has published a new Ambient Air Quality Directive, key points include:

- It is required to be transposed into Irish legislation by the 11 December 2026.
- The revised EU Ambient Air Quality Directive aims to gradually align EU air quality limits with WHO health-based guidelines.
- New and updated air quality limits must be met from 1 January 2030 to reduce premature deaths.
- The Directive is a key step toward achieving zero pollution in the EU by 2050.

See how the annual average limits are changing for following pollutants:



Annual average limit values for selected pollutants only



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What's new? And what it means for Ireland

Enhancing Air Quality Monitoring and Public Information for better health

Emerging Pollutants & Expanded Network

Ireland is expanding its air quality monitoring to better understand pollutants that can affect health in urban and rural areas. New monitoring will include:

- **Ultrafine particles (UFPs)**
- **Black carbon**
- **Ammonia**

Ireland plans to establish two supersites and a number of hotspots which will focus on areas directly affected by nearby pollution sources. A supersite will monitor multiple pollutants to continuously track emerging and current pollutants.



Updated Air Quality Index for Health (AQIH)

The AQIH has been updated to provide clearer and more timely health information. The AQIH now matches the approach used by the EEA:

- Particulate matter is now reported on an **hourly basis** (previously a 24-hour average)
- Applied across all monitoring stations and modelled air quality maps

Hourly Air Quality Forecasting

- New **hourly forecasts, predicting air quality for the next 72 hours** providing more detailed and timely information
- Helps the public make informed decisions and reduce exposure to air pollution

Improved EU Reporting Through Modelling

- High-resolution air quality maps will assess areas without monitoring stations
- Results will be expert-reviewed and supported by indicative monitoring to verify any modelled exceedances prior to reporting

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Local Authority Engagement

New requirements to implement control measures to tackle pollution



Local Authority Air Quality Road Map

A plan made in advance to prevent air pollution from exceeding the new 2030 limits.



When is it needed?

If there is an exceedance of the 2030 limit/target value between the period 2026 to 2029.



The road map must include

- Clear Action Measures
- How these actions will be implemented



Objective:

To obtain the limit or target value from 2030.



Local Authority Air Quality Action Plan

A plan made after pollution limits have been exceeded, explaining how pollution will be reduced as quickly as possible.



When is it needed?

After the 2030 deadline when there is an exceedance of limit/target value.



Objective:

To keep the exceedance period as short as possible.



Key Action Focus

- Implement pollution reduction measures
- Reduce exposure risks
- Restore compliance

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Information & Communication

Information and alert thresholds in the new Ambient Air Quality Directive aim to inform the public about health risks. EPA analysis (2021–2025) shows that alert threshold exceedances in Ireland have been rare and isolated.

Information thresholds exceedance:

- Trigger immediate public information within hours, targeted at sensitive populations

Alert thresholds exceedance:

- Trigger immediate public information within hours, targeted at sensitive populations
- Trigger short-term action plans

Pollutant	Averaging Period	Information Threshold	Alert Threshold
SO ₂	1 hr	275 µg/m ³ (1 hr)	350 µg/m ³ (3 hrs)
NO ₂	1 hr	150 µg/m ³ (1 hr)	200 µg/m ³ (3 hrs)
PM _{2.5}	1 day	50 µg/m ³ (1 day)	50 µg/m ³ (3 days)
PM ₁₀	1 day	90 µg/m ³ (1 day)	90 µg/m ³ (3 days)
O ₃	1 hr	180 µg/m ³ (1 hr)	240 µg/m ³ (3 hrs)

Short Term Action Plans

The local authority are required to develop short term action plans when an alert threshold is exceeded.

Action measures could include:

- Traffic restrictions
- Temporary suspension of construction / dust activities
- Public Health Messages

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2030 Compliance

Air quality in Ireland is generally good.

In 2025, the main sources of air pollution in Ireland were particulate matter from home heating and nitrogen dioxide from road traffic.

The new stricter EU 2030 limits are significantly lower than the current limits.

If no further action is taken Ireland is expected to meet:

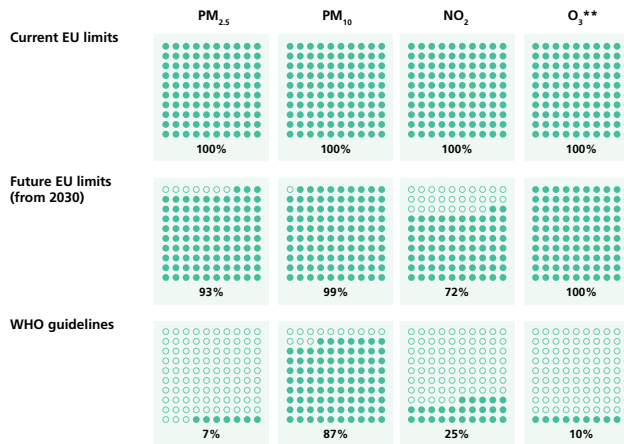
- 93% of the new PM_{2.5} standard.
- 72% of the new NO₂ standard.

To meet the 2030 limits, Ireland will need to take further action. This includes:

- Stronger enforcement of solid fuel regulations.
- Continued retrofitting of homes to improve energy efficiency.
- Greater investment in walking, cycling, and public transport infrastructure.

The diagram compares Ireland's 2025 air quality with the new 2030 limits and WHO Guidelines.

Percentage of monitoring stations in 2025 in Ireland achieving annual average limit/guideline values*



* stations with at least 50% data capture

** Maximum daily 8-hour mean limit exceedances averaged over 3 years



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Delivering Clean Air: Co-ordinated Action Across the Public Sector

Local Authorities



Develop Roadmaps for areas with exceedances by 2028.



Inform the public when thresholds are exceeded.



Continued enforcement and inspection of solid fuels.



Promote retrofitting houses and cleaner transport options.



Improve local awareness and support active travel infrastructure.



Policy Challenges



Support the development and delivery of roadmaps.



Increase awareness and uptake of low-smoke fuels.



Implement Clean Air Strategy.



Expand investment in public transport.



Continue support for active travel policies.



Role of the EPA



Establish new supersites and monitoring hotspots.



Notify local authorities of threshold exceedances.



Support roadmap development and implementation.



Maintain monitoring, validation and reporting of air quality.



Work with the Department and local authorities on enforcement and monitoring.



TFI Smarter Travel – National Transport



National retrofitting scheme SEAI grants

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What can I do?

Together, small changes in individual and community behaviour can significantly improve air quality. Click on the bubbles to discover simple actions you can take.

The EPA conducted a national survey on behavioural change, which assessed awareness and attitudes to air quality. [Click here to read the full report](#)

Key Findings

- **Awareness of air quality risks has declined**, particularly regarding the health impacts of solid-fuel. Despite this, **positive behavioural changes are being observed**.
- Overall, the findings suggest that **behavioural changes are contributing to improved air quality**.
- **Public transport use has increased**, helping to reduce emissions.
- More people are **choosing cleaner, less smoky fuels** for home heating.
- **Home energy upgrades and retrofits** remain among the most popular actions being considered for future adoption.

Awareness may be declining, but growing adoption of cleaner transport, heating, and home energy measures is supporting better air quality.

Promoting healthy air outside schools



Clean Air in
Ireland

WATCH
ABC for
cleaner Air

Home
Energy
Grants

Reduce
pollution
from cars
and home
heating



Stop idling



Active travel

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What can I do?

Reduce Home Heating Pollution (PM)



Avoid using solid fuels
if you have an alternative
cleaner heating system.



**Change how you
heat your home**
by using cleaner
fuel choices.



**Make your home more
energy efficient**
and more comfortable.

Reduce Car Pollution (NO₂)



**Leave the
car at home**
if you can for 1 day
a week.



Carpool
and reduce the
amount of cars
on the road.



**Take public
transport**
or walk, or cycle.



**Work
from home**
for part of your
working week.



Go electric



Stop idling

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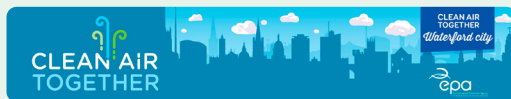
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Explore the air quality research activities and projects the EPA are involved in.
For more information and links to related research, visit the [Learn More](#) page.

Clean Air Together

Clean Air Together concluded its
Waterford monitoring campaign in 2025.



Results from the Waterford
campaign are available here

Irish Perspectives on School Ambient Air Quality



PHOTONICS2 PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

- ▶ Low awareness of school air pollution
- ▶ Backs education and awareness
- ▶ Encourages community action
- ▶ Protects children's health and local air quality
- ▶ Supported by the EU Horizon 2020



Read more about
this study here

Peace-Air

Cross-border air quality initiative
between Ireland and Northern
Ireland:

- ▶ Supported by PEACEPLUS
- ▶ Supports community action to protect health and the environment



Read more about
this project here

TownAir

TownAir is a project that studies:

- ▶ where harmful fine particles ($PM_{2.5}$) in the air come from and
- ▶ how they affect air quality in towns across Ireland



Read more about
this project here

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The EPA's successful citizen science project Clean Air Together (CAT) has engaged the public in measuring levels of the traffic-related air pollutant nitrogen (NO_2) in their local area, helping to build a better understanding of air quality at city and community level. **See full details at cleanairtogether.ie.**

- ▶ Clean Air Together moved to Waterford city in 2025, with over 300 citizens, businesses and community groups taking part.
- ▶ Results from the Waterford city campaign showed 85% of locations sampled were in the lowest category for NO_2 (0-10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), with a further 14% in the next lowest category (10-20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$).
- ▶ Clean Air Together has now taken place across five cities in Ireland, with strong public engagement and participation from over 2,700 citizens since 2021.
- ▶ The campaigns have provided valuable snapshots of NO_2 levels, complementing the EPA's existing air quality monitoring network and supporting air quality modelling and forecasting.
- ▶ The EPA would like to take this opportunity to thank all citizens, community groups and organisations who have participated over the years - your contributions have been central to the success of this project.

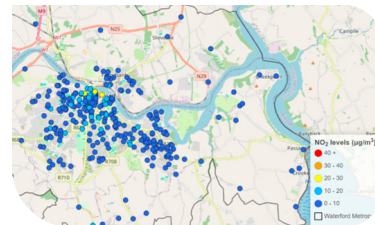
WATCH
CAT
Dublin

WATCH
CAT
Cork

WATCH
CAT
Galway

CAT
Limerick

CAT
Waterford



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If you want more information go to the EPA
Air Quality Frequently Asked Questions



For health advice related
to air quality and wildfires
please contact the HSE



USEFUL LINKS

-  Real Time Air Quality Data for Ireland
-  EPA's Monthly Bulletins
-  Clean Air Strategy
-  Climate Action Plan 2025
-  National Transport Authority Strategy
-  Healthier Environment for All

AIR QUALITY RESEARCH

-  EPA funded research in Air Quality
-  PEACEPLUS Project
-  ESRI funded research in Air Quality

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

-  GHG Emissions Report 2026

EU & WHO

-  New Ambient Air Quality Directive (EU) 2024/2881
-  EEA: Air Quality Status Report 2026
-  WHO Air Quality Guidelines
-  WHO: Breathe Life - How air pollution impacts your body
-  EU Air Quality Index for Health
-  Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook 2025
-  EU Health Atlas
-  Exceedance of Air Quality Limits in Europe
-  Air Pollution and Children's Health
-  Air Quality Statistics
-  European City Air Quality Viewer
-  EU Reporting on Airports
-  EU Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy

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Clever Cats Graphic Design

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