



NICA NATIONAL
INTERSCHOLASTIC
CYCLING ASSOCIATION

Air Quality

Weather Reference

Air Quality can be affected by several different factors ranging from pollen to pollution to forest fires. The air quality is monitored by the Air Now system (<https://www.airnow.gov>). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Park Service, tribal, state, and local agencies developed the AirNow system to provide the public with easy access to national air quality information.

Air Quality Index

Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	Meaning
Good	0 to 50	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	100 to 151	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
Unhealthy	151 to 200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.
Hazardous	301 to 500	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.

<https://www.airnow.gov/aqi/aqi-basics/>

The primary air quality consideration is that each person's sensitivity varies as much as the range in air quality. For instance, someone with little sensitivity could not experience any difficulty breathing while someone with asthma could end up in the hospital. Be aware of your athlete's sensitivity.

Here are some additional considerations for holding NICA events when the air quality is poor.

- ensure your event doesn't contribute to long-term health issues such as younger athletes developing asthma
- consider the short term effects of your athletes' health, i.e. how they will do the week following a practice/ race in pollution
- consideration for potentially immediate health consequences for your more sensitive athletes with asthma and similar existing conditions

Code GREEN

- AQI is Good (Green) (<https://www.airnow.gov>)

Code YELLOW

- AQI is Moderate (Yellow) (<https://www.airnow.gov>)
- Coaches should check-in with students-athletes who have higher air quality sensitivity

Code ORANGE

- AQI is Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (Orange) (<https://www.airnow.gov>)
- Competitive activities are canceled
- Non-competitive activities duration and intensity are reduced to 1 hour

Code RED

- AQI is Unhealthy (Red), Very Unhealthy (Plum), Hazardous (Dark Purple) (<https://www.airnow.gov>)
- Activity is canceled for both competitive and non-competitive activities.