

The Clean Air Act requires EPA to review National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) every 5 years to determine whether they should be retained or revised. As a result of that regularly scheduled review, in December 2012, EPA strengthened the NAAQS for fine particles (particles smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter, commonly referred to as PM<sub>2.5</sub>) from 15 ug/m<sup>3</sup> to 12 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. PM<sub>2.5</sub> can be emitted directly from many sources, including vehicles, smokestacks and fires. They also form when gases emitted by power plants, industrial processes, and gasoline and diesel engines react in the atmosphere. Exposure to fine particle pollution can cause premature death and harmful cardiovascular effects such as heart attacks and strokes.

On Monday, March 18, the Air Quality Index (AQI), EPA’s tool for telling the public how clean or polluted the air is, is being updated to reflect this change. The revised AQI breakpoints are outlined in this table:

AQI Category	Index Values	Current Breakpoints in micrograms/cubic meter	Revised Breakpoints in micrograms/cubic meter
Good	0-50	0-15	0-12
Moderate	51-100	>15-40	12.1-35.4
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101-150	>40-65	35.5-55.4
Unhealthy	151-200	>65-150	55.5-150.4
Very Unhealthy	201-300	>150-250	150.5-250.4
Hazardous	301-500	>250-500	250.5-500

More information about is available at [www.epa.gov/airquality/particlepollution/actions.html#dec12](http://www.epa.gov/airquality/particlepollution/actions.html#dec12). Charts showing local historical data for air quality, mold, and pollen can be found on Canton City Health Department’s website at [www.cantonhealth.org/apc/?pg=306](http://www.cantonhealth.org/apc/?pg=306).