

Air Quality

DRAFT

Maintain High Air Quality

Target(s):

Maintain "Good" air quality on the AQI in at least 90% of days measured each year.

Lincoln Now:

Air quality directly affects the health of people living in an area. Lincoln's air quality has maintained "attainment" status under the federal Clean Air Act for over a decade. Maintaining attainment status assures health risks are kept low and prevents onerous Federal air quality requirements that could dampen economic development.

Air quality in Lancaster County has historically been high. Lancaster County benefits from prevailing westerly winds and an extensive rural landscape between Lincoln and Denver. The level of air pollution, as measured against standards set by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is historically low.

The *Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department* conducts regular air quality monitoring activities and provides up to date information on their website using the EPA's "Air Quality Index" ("AQI"). The AQI reports daily air quality, reflecting how clean or polluted an area's air is and what associated health effects might be a concern. The AQI is divided into six categories (Good; Moderate; Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups; Unhealthy; Very Unhealthy; Hazardous). A "Good" AQI says that air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.

In FY11, 90% of the days that were monitored met the AQI criteria for "Good" air quality. (100% Good for Ozone, 100% Good for CO₂, and 90% Good for PM_{2.5}). This compares to 84% in FY10, 97% in FY09, and 94% of days in both FY 08 and FY 07. Flint Hills, Kansas burning contributed to several of the days with higher levels, but both atmospheric (long periods of very high humidity) and other conditions were also significant factors.

