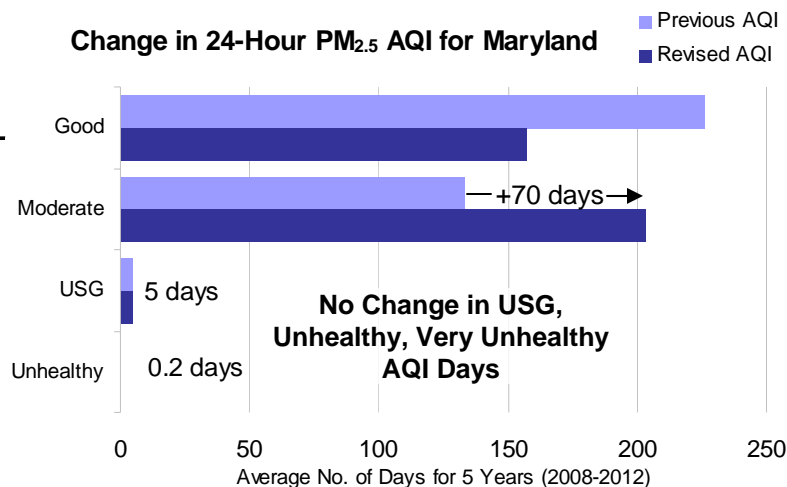


# Air Quality Facts

## 24-Hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> Revised Air Quality Index

### IMPACTS OBSERVED IN MARYLAND

| AQI Category                   | AQI Values | Previous Concentrations (ug/m <sup>3</sup> ) | Revised Concentrations (ug/m <sup>3</sup> ) |
|--------------------------------|------------|--|---|
| Good                           | 0- 50      | 0 – 15.4                                     | 0 – 12.0                                    |
| Moderate                       | 51 - 100   | 15.5 - 35.4                                  | 12.1 - 35.4                                 |
| Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups | 101 - 150  | 35.5 – 55.4                                  | 35.5 – 55.4                                 |
| Unhealthy                      | 151 - 200  | 55.5 – 150.4                                 | 55.5 – 150.4                                |
| Very Unhealthy                 | 201 - 300  | 150.5 – 250.4                                | 150.5 – 250.4                               |



### Revised 24-Hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> Air Quality Index

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revised the Air Quality Index (AQI) for daily 24-hour average fine particle (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) pollution on December 14, 2012. This revision is part of the strengthening of the annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> health based standard. The AQI is a color-coded metric used to communicate air quality conditions. Only the upper range of the Good AQI and the lower range of the Moderate AQI categories were affected. The upper range of the Good AQI was revised to the level of the annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> health based standard of 12.0 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. The revised AQI is effective March 18, 2013 and replaces the AQI that the Maryland Department of the Environment has used since 2009.

How will this revised AQI impact Maryland? The AQI change will not affect air quality conditions in Maryland. However at first, it will give the impression that Maryland measures more Moderate AQI days than it has in previous years. On average over the last 5 years (2008 – 2012), Maryland has recorded approximately 133 Moderate PM<sub>2.5</sub> days per year based on the previous AQI. Using the revised AQI, the number of Moderate AQI days per year in Maryland increases by about 70 days for a total of 203 days on average. As a result, Good days experience the opposite effect and show a decrease of 70 days per year. However, it is important to note that there were no changes to the Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (USG) or above AQI categories so the number of these days will remain the same.

By region based on air monitoring data over the last 5 years, the revised AQI results in an average increase of 64 Moderate days per year for the Metropolitan Baltimore area whereas the Metropolitan Washington area observes about 81 more Moderate days. The Eastern Shore and Western Maryland areas are not influenced to the extent of the metropolitan areas. These areas have an average increase of 36 and 49 Moderate days for the Eastern Shore and the Western Maryland regions, respectively.

More information on the revised 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> AQI and the strengthened annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> health based standard can be found at [www.epa.gov/pm/actions.html#dec12](http://www.epa.gov/pm/actions.html#dec12).



| Region           | Previous Moderate AQI Days | Revised Moderate AQI Days |
|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Metro Baltimore  | 119                        | 183                       |
| Metro Washington | 112                        | 193                       |
| Eastern Shore    | 45                         | 81                        |
| Western Maryland | 66                         | 115                       |

Average No. of Days for 5 Years (2008-2012)

| AQI | 0-50 | 51-100   | 101-150 | 151-200   | 201-300        | 301-500   |
|-----|------|----------|---------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
|     | Good | Moderate | USG*    | Unhealthy | Very Unhealthy | Hazardous |

\* USG: Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups

Note: 2012 data are preliminary. Data used in this report should not be used for regulatory purposes. Monitors from surrounding jurisdictions were used in regional AQI calculations.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1800 Washington Boulevard | Baltimore, MD 21230

410-537-3000 | 1-800-633-6101

Martin O'Malley, Governor | Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor | Robert M. Summers, Ph.D., Secretary

