

AIR QUALITY FLAG PROGRAM

Newsletter

Communities Raising Air Quality Awareness

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What do a children’s museum, public library, large corporation, botanical gardens and a school have in common? They all raise a flag to increase awareness about the air we breathe.

The EPA’s Air Quality Flag Program started out as a visual way K-12 schools could share information about their local air quality and protect the health of students, teachers, and staff. The program created outreach and support materials geared toward schools.

Based on the Air Quality Index (a guide for reporting daily air quality that is available to communities across the country) EPA’s Air Quality Flag Program uses brightly colored flags to notify people and their communities about outdoor air quality conditions.

We soon realized that other organizations were also using the flag program, including businesses, fire stations, and health departments. So we expanded the Air Quality Flag Program suite of materials.

Now all organizations raise a flag each day that corresponds to their local air quality forecast. People can continue to get plenty of physical activity, while still protecting their health. When air quality is unhealthy, people can modify their activities, or move them inside. Recommendations for outdoor activities on poor air quality days can be found at www.airnow.gov/flag.



Provo Fire & Rescue—Community Partners

Six fire stations in Provo, Utah raise an air quality flag each day to keep their community informed.



Provo, Utah, Fire Station 24

New Resources

- The new Spanish-language version of the AQFP website is now available at https://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=flag_program.spanish.
- Tips for Planning a Flag Event and information on Flag Etiquette are posted on the flag website under Outreach Materials at www.airnow.gov/flag.
- The new Air Quality Flag Program poster for schools is on the website and can be ordered at www.epa.gov/nscep.
- A poster for non-school organizations is now available and can be downloaded free at www.airnow.gov/flag.

EPA'S Village Green Project Features Air Quality Flags

Several of EPA's community solar-powered air monitoring benches are raising air quality flags to signal local air quality conditions. EPA's Village Green Project is a community-based activity to demonstrate the capabilities of new real-time ambient air monitoring technologies and increase air quality awareness for residents and citizen scientists.

To date, three Village Green stations have partnered with EPA's Air Quality Flag Program. Using solar and wind power, these park benches provide minute-to-minute air quality measurements for ozone, particulate pollution, and weather conditions and are used for educational outreach to the local community and area schools. It made sense to pair the monitoring information with the colorful flags. We are excited to begin this partnership with the Village Green Project and provide an opportunity for visitors to learn about air quality instrumentation, the Air Quality Index (AQI), and their local air quality. For more on the Project, visit www.epa.gov/villagegreen.



Partner	Location	Adopted AQFP
Durham County South Regional Library	Durham, NC	◆
Kansas City South Branch Library	Kansas City, KS	◆
Myriad Botanical Gardens	Oklahoma City, OK	◆

The WIDGET Makes it Easy!

The Air Quality Flag Program widget is a small graphic that can easily be added to your organization's website. It links to air quality information for your area and updates the flag color on the graphic automatically -- so people coming to your website will quickly be able to know the air quality conditions and you will always know which color flag to fly. The widget includes the air quality forecast for the day, current air quality, tomorrow's forecast, and an activity guide.



Current Stats

EPA's Air Quality Flag Program was started in May 2010. Today the program is reaching more than one million individuals nationwide.

Over 430,000 students, teachers and staff benefit from having an Air Quality Flag Program in their schools.

Businesses, organizations and government entities display the air quality flags for more than 555,000 citizens in the US.

EPA's Village Green Project in partnership with the Air Quality Flag Program will reach an estimated 74,000 members of the general public.

Upcoming

The AQFP Spring Challenge will give EPA Regions, State, local and Tribal agencies an opportunity to compete as they increase their number of new flag program participants mid April to mid May. Look for complete details and information coming soon.



Please submit comments and feedback to rogers.donna@epa.gov.