

Air pollution is a problem in Scotland

There are 34 Air Quality Management Areas in Scotland which have pollution levels **damaging to human health**.¹

Am I at risk?

Yes. It is especially harmful to children, older people, pregnant women and people with existing health conditions. Air pollution is often worse in inner-city areas increasing inequalities in health.

Can it affect my health?

Yes. It can cause acute harm to our heart and lungs and chronic harm to every organ in the body. It is linked to pregnancy loss, premature birth, low birth weight and can affect lung development.²

Can it be fatal?

Yes. It is considered the biggest environmental health risk across Europe.³ In the UK it is linked to 28,000 – 36,000 attributable deaths per year.⁴

Air pollution is linked to over 1700 premature deaths a year in Scotland.⁵

What causes air pollution?

Traffic is the number one cause of air pollution in Scotland.⁶ Other sources include domestic wood burning and industrial facilities such as power plants, refineries, factories and agriculture.

Is my air pollution monitored?

Possibly. There is live air monitoring from 99 sites around Scotland which can be found on this [website](#).

What is the Scottish Government doing?

Cleaner Air For Scotland 2 is Scotland's strategy to comply with EU⁷ and UK-wide air quality standards.⁸ This includes Low Emission Zones in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Environmental Standards Scotland has required the Government to take action to address breaches of air quality standards. These will need to be implemented effectively.

We all have the right to

CLEAN AIR

Get involved in campaigning against air pollution

Contact:

[Friends of the Earth Scotland Campaign against air pollution](#)
[Clean Air Day](#)

More information

[Air Quality in Scotland](#) / [Environmental Protection Scotland](#) / [UK air quality tool](#) / [2021 Air Quality Scotland Brochure](#) / [Breathe Scotland](#)

What can I do if I have a concern?

Contact our Rights Officer to talk more at rights@ercs.scot

Contact our free legal advice service at www.ercs.scot/get-advice

Call our office on **0131 358 0038** or freephone on **0800 861 1738**

¹ Scottish Air Quality (accessed 6 December 2023) [Air Quality Management Areas](#)

² European Environment Agency (accessed 8 June 2022) [Air pollution: how it affects our health](#)

³ Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (2018) [Associations of long-term average concentrations of nitrogen dioxide with mortality](#)

⁴ Health Protection Scotland (June 2018) [Mortality associated with exposure to fine particulate matter \(PM2.5 attributable mortality\) in Scotland](#)

⁵ Schraufnagel et al. (March 2018) [Air Pollution and Noncommunicable Diseases](#)

⁶ Scotland's environment (accessed 8 June 2022) [Air Quality](#)

⁷ European Union (2010) [Industrial Emissions Directive \(Directive 2010/75/EU\)](#)

⁸ Scottish Government (2016) [Part IV of The Environment Act 1995](#)