Daily Air Quality Index
2011 Levels At-A-Glance

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO)

CO levels in Fort Collins are significantly better than the national air quality standard, and have been steadily improving for the last 20 years. CO is emitted mainly by motor vehicles and the improvement is largely due to the federal new car emission standards. Daily readings do not total 365 days due to monitor down time.

PARTICULATE MATTER (PM10 AND PM2.5)

PM10 (particulate matter smaller than 10 micrometers in diameter) measured better than the national health standard throughout 2011. These particles come from roads, fields, and construction sites. Daily readings do not total 365 days due to monitor down time.

Fine particles or PM2.5 (particulate matter smaller than 2.5 micrometers in diameter) measured slightly better than the national air quality standard on the highest day. PM2.5 comes from the incomplete combustion of motor vehicle fuels and from reactions that occur between certain pollutants in the atmosphere. Fine particles are small enough to bypass the lungs’ natural defenses and can be deposited in the lungs. In addition, PM2.5 is the principle factor in poor visibility.

OZONE

The ozone level at the Fort Collins West monitoring site was worse than the national air quality standard on 8 days in 2011, with the highest reading of 86 (parts per billion) compared with the 75 ppb standard. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has directed that the ozone problem be solved regionally in an area extending to Denver and Greeley. Ozone is formed when hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides react in sunlight. They’re emitted mainly by motor vehicles and industrial sources. Daily readings do not total 365 days due to monitor down time.

VISIBILITY

Visibility is a measure of how clear the air looks. Note that the Colorado visibility standard is based on observer preference or aesthetics rather than health impact. Although visibility on the highest day in 2011 was almost two times its preference limit, the fine particles mostly responsible for the brown cloud consistently measured better than the PM2.5 limit based on health. To distinguish visibility from the health-related pollutants, it is reported on a separate Visibility Standard Index with categories good, fair, poor, extremely poor, and “missing.” Missing data occur on days when high humidity interferes with visibility measurements.

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Air Quality
fcgov.com/airquality
970-221-6600
**VISIBILITY**

Fort Collins visibility remains consistently worse than the Colorado standard an average of one day out of four.

For 30 years, ozone levels at the Downtown site have been essentially flat. However, levels violate the health standard at our second site, Fort Collins West, which has operated for six years.

**CARBON MONOXIDE**

The CO level steadily has decreased due to vehicle emission standards and vehicle emission testing.

**PM10**

For 20 years, PM10 has remained at roughly half the health standard with no upward or downward trend.

**PM2.5**

For 12 years, PM2.5 has consistently measured around 80% of the current health standard.