

air pollution index (air quality index)

A mathematical combination of the concentrations of air pollutants (weighted in some fashion to reflect the estimated health impact of the specific pollutant) which gives an approximate numerical measure of the quality of the air at a given time. These indices have little scientific basis but have been used to inform the public (in a qualitative fashion) of the degree of pollution present at a given time. It is recommended that the actual measured pollutant concentrations be used by all information services when possible with simultaneous reference given to the corresponding concentrations which are considered by health authorities to be hazardous to human health.

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