

# Precautionary outdoor air quality statement issued

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SARASOTA COUNTY - Sarasota County has issued a precautionary statement regarding elevated Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) levels due to impacts from Saharan Dust.

Per the Environmental Protection Agency's national ambient air quality standards for public health, levels may reach the “unhealthy for sensitive groups” category. PM<sub>2.5</sub> are inhalable particles of 2.5 micrometers or smaller.

The general public is not likely to be affected. Those sensitive to PM<sub>2.5</sub> should consider limiting prolonged outdoor exertion. Any health-related questions should be directed to your personal healthcare provider.

**This air advisory is in effect through July 12, 2024.**

Saharan Dust is impacting air quality across Florida. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Saharan dust comes from the Sahara Desert in Northern Africa. Thunderstorms and cyclones produce high-speed winds that lift the dust and transport it thousands of miles. Saharan Dust usually impacts our area yearly during the summer months and continues until mid to late July. In the United States, the dust mainly affects Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and southern states, including Florida and Texas.

The Sarasota County Air Program has monitored air quality since 1985. Currently, it reports it to the community through the Air Quality Index, alerting residents of current air quality conditions and pollutants in Sarasota County. With four monitoring stations throughout the county, data is collected in real-time for ozone levels and other particulate matter that can impact at-risk residents such as those with asthma or respiratory conditions.

Sarasota County meets all national air quality standards and continues to improve due to local, state, and federal policies.

For more information, dial 311 or visit [scgov.net](http://scgov.net).

*[Return to full list >>](#)*