



Celebrating
25 Years
1995-2020

The Environmental Management Authority celebrates the inaugural International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies

#CleanAirforall #BreatheLife

On Monday 7th September, 2020, Trinidad & Tobago will join in the celebrations of the United Nations' first International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies. Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) is a member of the BreatheLife Campaign and will join the world in celebrating this new environmental day. Activities will focus on the central theme of improving air quality and will include a webinar, publication of video clips, a call for corporate entities and persons to pledge commitments/actions.

The 2018 National Environmental Policy (NEP) emphasises that protecting human health through pollution control is a national priority and responsibility of all. Sensitive groups may be more susceptible when exposed to air pollution, but prolonged exposure will affect an increased proportion of the population. Long term exposure to air pollutants is known to reduce lung function and cause respiratory illness, which supports the growing body of evidence that poor air quality can leave persons at greater risk for contracting the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), leading to serious illness and sometimes death. When it comes to protecting our health from air pollution, everyone has a role to play.

Addressing air pollution is one of T&T's priorities. As the first Caribbean country to join the BreatheLife campaign, Trinidad and Tobago is committed to reducing its emissions and fostering the protection of human health and the environment. In order to manage air pollution, levels must be measured. The Environmental Management Authority (EMA), guided by the Environmental Management Act, Chapter 35:05, has established a national network of air quality monitoring stations. The data and information collected from these stations are used to track and analyse pollution trends, conduct impact assessments of pollution sources, as well as determine compliance with existing standards.

This information, in turn, assists in targeting strategies for air pollution control, which results in better air quality. Cleaner air means the population less susceptible to COVID-19.

The EMA, through its National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network (AAQMN) is assessing real-time ambient air quality data at strategic locations throughout the country since 2015. There are currently three (3) Ambient Air Quality Monitoring stations in T&T, two located in Trinidad (Port-of-Spain and Point Lisas) and a third station located at Signal Hill, Tobago. The AAQMN continues to expand; stations will be situated in San Fernando and Arima by the end of 2020.



Figure 1: Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Station

A key component of the air management programme is the development of an Air Quality Index (AQI). This is a colour coded number used for reporting daily air quality. It tells you how clean or polluted the air is in real-time. The AQI displays air quality data, using visualisation tools in a format that is easily understood by the general public and advises the groups of persons who should be concerned and actions to take. The public can use the AQI to make informed decisions to safeguard their health. The Air Quality Management Information System (AQMIS) is a software used to link all the stations remotely, compile the data into an inventory system, perform data validation and produce an AQI that is disseminated in real-time to the public via the website <http://ei.weblakes.com/RTTPublic/DshBrdAQI> .

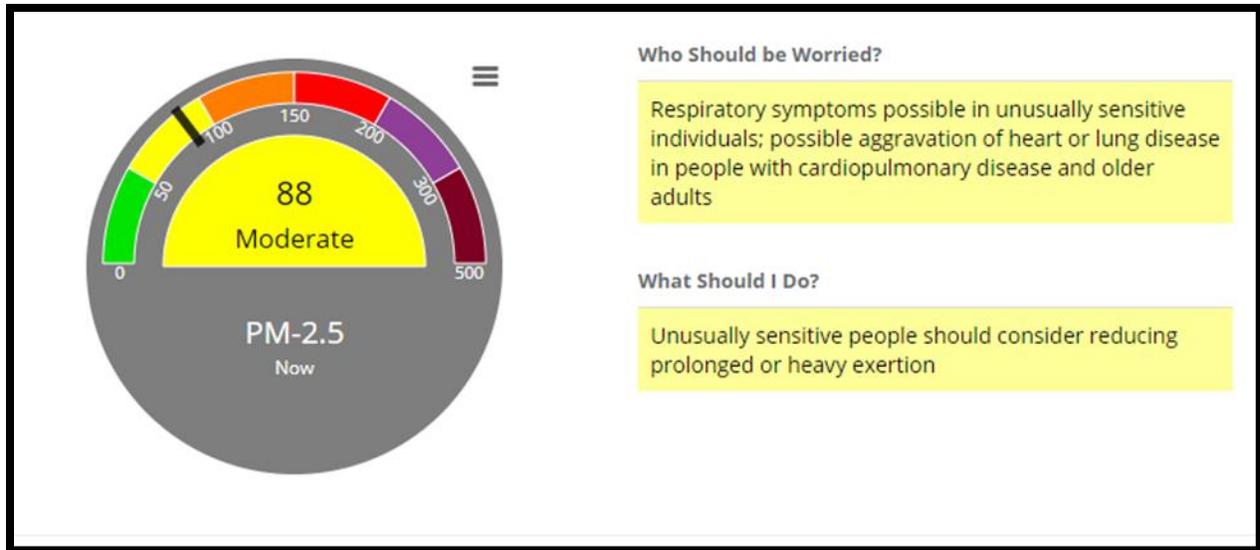


Figure 2: Example of AQI display

Air is essential for life. The EMA encourages you to visit the AQI website to view the real time air quality information. This information can help you plan your day and take appropriate actions to protect your health. The public is also encouraged to do their part in reducing emissions. Simple individual actions can make a collective difference. How can you participate? Complete this simple survey and make a pledge to reduce air pollution today (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GD8BMBF>). Every action counts. Act now to clear the air!

END

Please contact the EMA's Emergency Response Hotline at 680-9588 in the event of an environmental incident. For complaints, email us at complaints@ema.co.tt or visit our website at www.ema.co.tt

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