

# Rugby Canada Air Quality Guideline

## Purpose

This guideline helps Rugby Canada members, clubs, event organizers, and teams make informed decisions about outdoor activities when air quality is poor. It provides practical advice to reduce health risks from air pollution, including wildfire smoke, ozone, and smog.

## Resources:

SIRC has an in depth resource for understanding Air Quality and impact on sport:

<https://sirc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Air-Quality-Guiding-Document-FINAL-EN.pdf>

This guideline has been developed based on SIRC's policy guide found here:

<https://sirc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Air-Quality-Policy-Guide-FINAL-EN.pdf>

## 1. Understand Air Quality Health Index (AQHI)

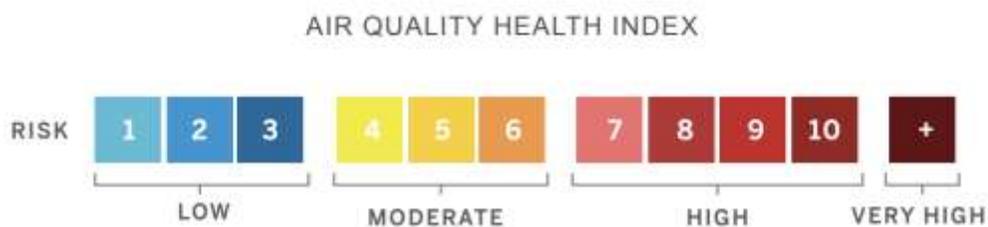


Figure 2. The AQHI scale and associated health risk categories.  
Image retrieved from [AirHealth.ca](https://www.airhealth.ca).

The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) ranges from 1 (low risk) to 10+ (very high risk). AQHI values are available on: <https://www.airhealth.ca>

The WeatherCAN app can be used as well (free and can set weather alerts)

## 2. Recommended Actions by AQHI Level

AQHI Level	Health Risk	Recommendations
1-3	Low	Proceed with outdoor rugby activities as usual.
4-6	Moderate	Consider reducing intensity and duration. Offer extra rest breaks and hydration. Monitor participants with asthma or other conditions.

7-10+	High to Very High	Reschedule or move activities indoors if possible. Strongly discourage participation for children, older adults, and those with health conditions. Cancel high-intensity sessions. Shifting the time of day based on the wind and weather is strongly advised.
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If visibility is poor due to smoke or smog, activities should be suspended regardless of AQHI rating.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

Coaches & Team Staff:

- Check the AQHI before all outdoor training or matches.
- Adjust, delay, or cancel sessions if needed.
- Discuss plans with parents and athletes when AQHI is elevated.

Officials:

- Use AQHI to support decisions about delaying or cancelling games.
- Prioritize participant safety.

Athletes & Families:

- Be aware of your own health conditions.
- Stay informed about air quality.
- Speak up if feeling unwell during poor air quality conditions.

### 4. Practical Tips

- Train earlier in the morning when air quality may be better.
- Have an indoor backup location if possible.
- Communicate decisions clearly and early to all participants.
- Include air quality considerations in your emergency action or event plan.

### 5. Education

Rugby Canada encourages coaches and administrators to complete the Air Quality and Outdoor Sport Safety eLearning module in The Locker (via the Coaching Association of Canada). Share this guideline with all team staff before the start of the season.

### 6. When in Doubt...

Make safety the priority. If the air doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

This guideline reflects Rugby Canada's commitment to health, safety, and responsible decision-making in sport. Rugby is tough, but your lungs shouldn't have to be.