

## Board Adopts “Identical-in-Substance” Amendments to Ambient Air Quality Standards

On April 2, 2026, the Board adopted amendments to keep Illinois’ ambient air quality standards (35 Ill. Adm. Code 243) identical in substance to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The amendments reflect three actions taken by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) during the 18-month period of July 1, 2024 through December 31, 2025.

- First, on December 27, 2024, USEPA revised the existing secondary sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) standard to an annual average, averaged over three consecutive years, with a level of 10 parts per billion (ppb). USEPA also revised data handling requirements for the secondary SO<sub>2</sub> NAAQS.
- Second, on April 7, 2025, USEPA designated two new Federal Equivalent Methods (FEMs) for measuring pollutant concentrations in ambient air, one for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and the other for coarse particulate matter (PM<sub>10-2.5</sub>).
- Third, and finally, on September 5, 2025, USEPA designated one new FEM for SO<sub>2</sub>, one new FEM for PM<sub>2.5</sub>, one new FEM for PM<sub>10-2.5</sub>, and one new reference method for measuring nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations in ambient air.

The Board’s proposed amendments were published in the *Illinois Register* on January 30, 2026 (50 Ill. Reg. 1610 (Jan. 30, 2026)). The Board received a public comment from the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). The final amendments reflect JCAR’s suggested changes. Lastly, the Board held a public hearing on March 5, 2026, to fulfill related federal Clean Air Act requirements as the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency will submit the final amendments to USEPA for approval as a State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision.

The Board’s rulemaking is captioned National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), USEPA Amendments (July 1, 2024 through December 31, 2025), dockets R25-15, R26-7, R26-15 (consol.). Here are links to the Board’s (1) [opinion and order](#) and (2) [addendum](#), which includes the text of the adopted amendments. For more information, please contact Joan Beacom at 312-814-6924 or [joan.beacom2@illinois.gov](mailto:joan.beacom2@illinois.gov).