

# Air pollution in Beijing hits hazardous levels

November 28 2015

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People wearing face masks walk across Tiananmen Square on a day with poor air quality in Beijing, Saturday, Nov. 28, 2015. Air pollution in Beijing reached hazardous levels on Saturday as smog engulfed large parts of the country despite efforts to clean up the foul air. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein)

Air pollution in Beijing reached hazardous levels on Saturday as smog engulfed large parts of China despite efforts to clean up the foul air.

At noon, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing reported the level of the poisonous, tiny particles of PM<sub>2.5</sub> at 391 micrograms per cubic meter.

The World Health Organization considers the safe level at 25 micrograms per cubic meter of the particulates.

The city has been shrouded in gray smog since Friday, reducing visibility to a few hundred meters (yards).

The Ministry of Environmental Protection has forecast severe [pollution](#) for the greater Beijing region, the western part of Shandong province and the northern part of Henan province until Tuesday, when strong winds from the north are expected to blow away [air](#) pollutants.

The ministry has advised people to stay indoors.

Authorities blame coal burning for winter heating as a major culprit for the [air pollution](#). The ministry said it had sent teams to check on illegal emissions by factories in several northern Chinese cities.



A Chinese paramilitary policeman stands guard on Tiananmen Square on a day with poor air quality in Beijing, Saturday, Nov. 28, 2015. Air pollution in Beijing reached hazardous levels on Saturday as smog engulfed large parts of the country despite efforts to clean up the foul air. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein)

In the past, authorities have shut down factories and pulled half of the vehicles off the roads to curb pollution. But such drastic measures are disruptive and are used only when the government feels it needs to present a better image to the world, such as when China hosts major global events or leaders.



A woman lifts a child holding Chinese flags following the daily flag-lowering ceremony at Tiananmen Square on a day with poor air quality in Beijing, Saturday, Nov. 28, 2015. Air pollution in Beijing reached hazardous levels on Saturday as smog engulfed large parts of the country despite efforts to clean up the foul air. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein)



A woman sells paper kites at Tiananmen Square on a day with poor air quality in Beijing, Saturday, Nov. 28, 2015. Air pollution in Beijing reached hazardous levels on Saturday as smog engulfed large parts of the country despite efforts to clean up the foul air. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein)

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