

Low-Income Residents and People of Color in Connecticut Are Living Near Chemical Dangers

The Center for Effective Government graded states based on the relative dangers faced by people of color and residents with incomes below the poverty line living within one mile of dangerous facilities. **Connecticut scored poorly with a “D” grade.**

Nationally, 7.5 percent of the population lives within one mile of a hazardous facility.

Key Findings

- Over 170,000 Connecticut residents (five percent of the total population) live within one mile of a facility storing large amounts of extremely hazardous chemicals. These “fenceline communities” face the possibility of a chemical leak, fire, or explosion on a daily basis.
- **Children of color under 12 are more than twice as likely to live in fenceline communities as white children.**
- **Poor Latino children are over three times more likely to live near chemical hazards than white children above the poverty line.**

Chemical dangers are real, and incidents are happening across Connecticut.

In April 2008, the H. Krevit & Co. facility in New Haven leaked 33 pounds of chlorine gas. Fourteen people were injured, including 12 employees. The plant is less than a mile and a half from Yale University, where more than 12,000 students study.

The H. Krevit plant uses **chlorine gas** in bleach manufacturing, even though it could switch to liquid chlorine to prevent airborne releases. The facility stores up to half a million pounds of the deadly gas at a time. Chlorine can spread quickly, and a major release could put an entire neighborhood in danger.

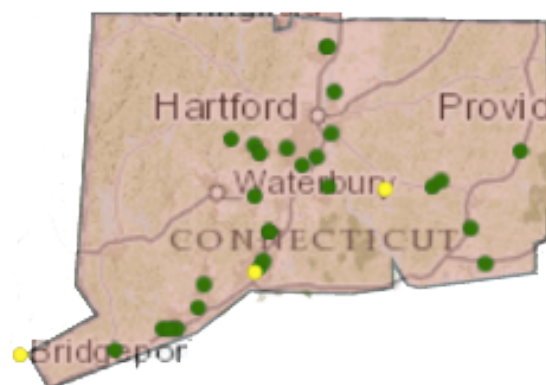
Connecticut’s 29 high-risk facilities are dotted across the state, with a higher concentration in cities and suburbs. They include everything from oil and gas distribution facilities to chemical manufacturing to food and beverage manufacturing.

But the plants themselves aren't the only risk. **Companies ship these dangerous chemicals to the facilities**, often by train or by truck, and accidents in transit can also lead to fatal releases.

Are people of color and low-income residents of Connecticut safe from chemical hazards?

The percentage of people in Connecticut who live in fenceline communities is lower than the national average of seven percent. However, people of color and poor populations are significantly more likely to be in danger. For example, 7.6 percent of children of color under 12 live in fenceline communities, compared to 3.4 percent of white children – **meaning they are more than twice as likely to live near chemical hazards**. Additionally, children of color are two-and-a-half times more likely than white children to attend public schools located within one mile of a hazardous facility.

Poor children under 12 are more than twice as likely to live in fenceline communities compared to children above the poverty line. Connecticut ranks fifth-worst in this measure. Living in the shadow of an industrial facility increases stress on poor communities as they worry about the potential for a catastrophic disaster and daily exposures to toxic emissions. Living near these facilities can also decrease home values, meaning many poor families can't afford to move to safer neighborhoods if they want to do so.



[Click here to open an interactive map of your neighborhood.](#)

Being poor and a child of color, however, significantly increases these likelihoods. Black and Latino children are over three times more likely to live near chemical hazards than white children who are not in poverty, and Asian and Pacific Islander children are twice as likely.

Additionally, 46 Connecticut public schools are located within one mile of a hazardous facility, putting 21,000 students in danger. Students receiving free lunches are two-and-a-half times more likely to attend these schools.

Inequities in Likelihood of Living in a Fenceline Community

Racial Inequities	Score	Grade	Income (Poverty) Inequities	Score	Grade
Percentage of People of Color Who Live in Fenceline	7.8%	C	Percentage of Poor People Who Live in Fenceline	8.3%	C
Likelihood of People of Color to Live in Fenceline (compared to whites)	2.1 times more likely	D	Likelihood of Poor People to Live in Fenceline (compared to those not in poverty)	1.8 times more likely	F
Percentage of Children of Color Under 12 Who Live in Fenceline	7.6%	C	Percentage of Poor Children Under 12 Who Live in Fenceline	9.6%	C
Likelihood of Children of Color Under 12 to Live in Fenceline (compared to white children under 12)	2.2 times more likely	D	Likelihood of Poor Children Under 12 to Live in Fenceline (compared to children under 12 not in poverty)	2.2 times more likely	F
Percentage of Children of Color Who Attend Public Schools in Fenceline	6%	B	Percentage of Children Receiving Free Lunch Who Attend Schools in Fenceline	7.3%	B
Likelihood of Children of Color to Attend Public Schools in Fenceline (compared to white children)	2.5 times more likely	F	Likelihood of Children Receiving Free Lunch to Attend Schools in Fenceline (compared to children not receiving free lunch)	2.5 times more likely	F
Percentage of Elderly of Color Who Live in Fenceline	7.8%	C	Percentage of Elderly Poor People Who Live in Fenceline	6.6%	C
Likelihood of Elderly of Color to Live in Fenceline (compared to elderly whites)	2.2 times more likely	D	Likelihood of Elderly Poor People to Live in Fenceline (compared to elderly people not in poverty)	1.7 times more likely	F
People of Color Grade		D	Poverty Grade		D
Overall Grade: D					

What you can do to protect your community from dangerous chemicals.

Connecticut residents like you can help. You can organize people in your community and educate others about these dangers. You can learn about your local zoning process (if your state gives local governments zoning authority) and whether it protects community members from nearby industrial plants that use hazardous chemicals – and share what you learn with your friends and neighbors. You can attend public meetings and planning hearings and urge decision makers to think carefully about the sites chosen for new industrial facilities, and you can write, call, and meet with other state, county, and city officials to send the message that **all** Connecticut residents deserve to be protected from chemical dangers.

You can also demand that the federal government require facilities to switch to safer chemicals and alternatives whenever feasible and urge the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection and federal OSHA to conduct more thorough and frequent inspections to spot problems before they cause disasters. And Connecticut residents can push local governments to require buffer zones around new and expanded chemical facilities to ensure homes and schools are not built nearby.

Table 1: Percentage of Population Who Live in Fenceline Communities, by Age and Race

	Black	Latino	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian	White Not Hispanic	All Races
All Ages	8.0%	8.8%	6.0%	6.1%	3.8%	5.0%
0-17	8.0%	8.6%	6.4%	5.4%	3.3%	5.0%
18-64	8.1%	8.9%	5.6%	6.4%	3.9%	5.1%
65+	7.3%	10.1%	9.5%	5.5%	3.6%	4.2%
Total # in fenceline	27,600	42,642	494	8,381	92,119	171,905
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites	2.1	2.4	1.6	1.6	---	---

Table 2: Percentage of Poor Population Who Live in Fenceline Communities, by Age and Race

	Black	Latino	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian	White Not Hispanic	All Races
All Ages	9.9%	10.8%	11.0%	10.6%	5.3%	8.3%
0-17	10.7%	10.9%	17.3%	6.5%	5.3%	9.2%
18-64	9.5%	10.8%	8.8%	12.0%	5.3%	8.1%
65+	9.7%	10.7%	0%	7.6%	5.1%	6.6%
Total # in fenceline	7,418	13,377	176	1,133	7,470	29,328
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites in poverty	1.9	2.1	2.1	2	---	---
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to same race not in poverty	1.3	1.3	2.3	1.9	1.4	1.8
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites not in poverty	2.7	3	3	2.9	1.4	---

Table 3: Percentage of Children Who Attend Public School in Fenceline Communities, by Grade and Race

	Black	Latino	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian	White Not Hispanic	All Races
All Grades	6.0%	6.9%	3.3%	3.9%	2.4%	3.9%
Pre-K - 2	6.2%	8.1%	5.1%	5.3%	3.6%	5.1%
3-7	6.0%	7.6%	3.8%	4.4%	2.7%	4.2%
8-12	5.7%	5.2%	1.9%	2.2%	1.5%	2.8%
Total # in fenceline	4,244	7,781	56	995	7,939	21,347
Likelihood of attending schools in fenceline, compared to white children	2.5	2.9	1.4	1.6	---	---

Find the Full Report at [ForEffectiveGov.org](https://www.foreffectivegov.org)