

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

The Center for Effective Government graded states based on the dangers faced by people of color and residents with incomes below the poverty line living within one mile of dangerous facilities, compared to white and non-poor people in these areas. **Indiana scored poorly with a “D” grade.**

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

Key Findings

- More than 600,000 Hoosiers (one in 10) live within one mile of a facility storing large amounts of extremely hazardous chemicals. These “fenceline communities” face potential chemical leaks and explosions on a daily basis.
- **Children of color under age 12 are roughly twice as likely to live in the shadow of a hazardous chemical facility compared to white children in Indiana.**
- **Poor black children are almost three times more likely to live near facilities than white children not in poverty.**

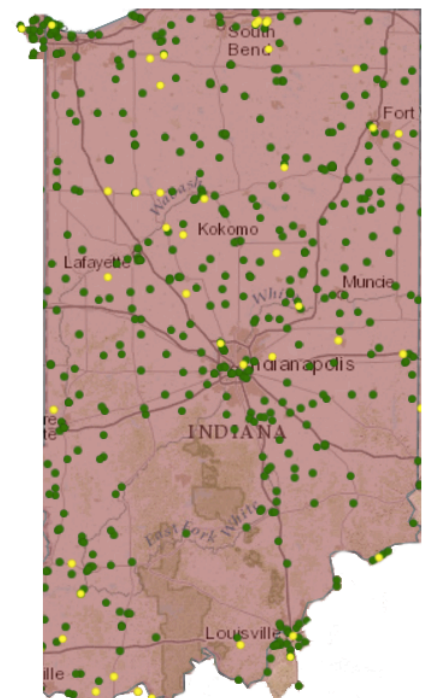
Chemical dangers are real, and Indiana has experienced recent industrial incidents.

Indiana has witnessed several industrial incidents in recent years. In February 2015, a fire involving methanol and other substances broke out at the Warsaw Chemical Company. The plant makes a variety of cleaners for car washes and is located 40 miles outside of South Bend. The incident injured eight people, forced the evacuation of 50 nearby homes, and contaminated a nearby lake, killing a significant number of fish. The plant had been repeatedly cited for environmental violations by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency before the fire occurred.

Indiana’s 457 high-risk facilities are scattered across the state, with high concentrations near Indianapolis and Gary. They include everything from chemical manufacturing plants, food production facilities, pharmaceutical manufacturing installations, and water treatment plants in cities and suburbs to rural ethanol production plants and fertilizer distribution facilities.

These facilities use and store a variety of chemicals, including **anhydrous ammonia**, which is sold as a fertilizer and is also used in commercial refrigeration. Water treatment plants and other industrial facilities store **chlorine gas**, a deadly substance that can be used as a chemical weapon. A leak from one of these plants could sicken and kill surrounding neighbors before they have time to evacuate.

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.



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

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

Nearly 17 percent of Latinos and almost 16 percent of blacks live in fenceline communities, compared to a little over eight percent of white residents. **Children of color under age 12 are almost twice as likely to live near potentially dangerous facilities as white kids in this age group.** These children face acute dangers and daily exposures to toxic chemicals that put them at a distinct disadvantage because young children are much more susceptible to chemical hazards than adults.

Poor children under age 12 also face unequal chemical dangers; nearly 15 percent live in a fenceline community, compared to 8.5 percent of non-poor children. **Poor black children fare even worse, being almost three times more likely to live near a dangerous facility than white children who aren't poor.** 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.

Inequities in Likelihood of Living in a Fenceline Community

Income (Poverty) Inequities	Score	Grade	Income (Poverty) Inequities	Score	Grade
Percentage of People of Color Who Live in Fenceline	15%	D	Percentage of Poor People Who Live in Fenceline	14%	D
Likelihood of People of Color to Live in Fenceline (compared to whites)	1.8 times more likely	D	Likelihood of Poor People to Live in Fenceline (compared to those not in poverty)	1.6 times more likely	D
Percentage of Children of Color Under 12 Who Live in Fenceline	15.1%	D	Percentage of Poor Children Under 12 Who Live in Fenceline	14.9%	F
Likelihood of Children of Color Under 12 to Live in Fenceline (compared to white children under 12)	1.9 times more likely	D	Likelihood of Poor Children Under 12 to Live in Fenceline (compared to children under 12 not in poverty)	1.8 times more likely	D
Percentage of Children of Color Who Attend Public Schools in Fenceline	15.3%	D	Percentage of Children Receiving Free Lunch Who Attend Schools in Fenceline	15.9%	D
Likelihood of Children of Color to Attend Public Schools in Fenceline (compared to white children)	1.2 times more likely	C	Likelihood of Children Receiving Free Lunch to Attend Schools in Fenceline (compared to children not receiving free lunch)	1.2 times more likely	C
Percentage of Elderly of Color Who Live in Fenceline	16%	F	Percentage of Elderly Poor People Who Live in Fenceline	12.4%	F
Likelihood of Elderly of Color to Live in Fenceline (compared to elderly whites)	1.8 times more likely	D	Likelihood of Elderly Poor People to Live in Fenceline (compared to elderly people not in poverty)	1.4 times more likely	C
People of Color Grade		D	Poverty Grade		D
Overall Grade: D					

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

Hoosiers 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** Hoosiers 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 Indiana Department of Environmental Management and the state-level OSHA to conduct more thorough and frequent inspections to spot problems before they cause disasters. And Hoosiers 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	15.9%	16.9%	11.4%	7.5%	8.4%	9.7%
0-17	16.1%	16.5%	10.5%	7.2%	7.9%	9.8%
18-64	15.6%	17.0%	11.9%	7.6%	8.6%	9.7%
65+	16.3%	20.5%	9.4%	7.9%	8.7%	9.4%
Total # in fenceline	89,302	66,183	1,634	7,866	433,660	610,588
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites	1.9	2.0	1.3	1.1 times less likely	---	---

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	19.2%	18.4%	14.1%	7.2%	11.9%	14.0%
0-17	19.2%	18.5%	9.2%	8.5%	11.9%	14.8%
18-64	19.1%	18.1%	16.1%	6.8%	12.0%	13.7%
65+	18.6%	20.4%	20.4%	7.1%	11.2%	12.4%
Total # in fenceline	34,521	21,299	445	1,596	73,909	135,580
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites in poverty	1.6	1.5	1.2	1.7	---	---
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to same race not in poverty	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.1 times less likely	1.5	1.6
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites not in poverty	2.4	2.3	1.8	1.1 times less likely	1.5	---

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	14.2%	18.0%	13.5%	9.8%	12.4%	13.2%
Pre-K - 2	17.9%	20.7%	13.6%	9.8%	11.7%	13.6%
3-7	15.1%	17.0%	13.1%	9.7%	12.2%	13.1%
8-12	10.8%	16.9%	13.8%	9.8%	13.0%	13.1%
Total # in fenceline	18,000	18,016	382	1,883	92,184	137,215
Likelihood of attending schools in fenceline, compared to white students	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.3 times less likely	---	---

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