

Low-Income Residents and People of Color in Nevada 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. **Nevada scored in the middle with a “C” grade.**

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

Key Findings

- Over 110,000 Nevada residents (4.1 percent of the total population) live within one mile of a facility storing large amounts of extremely hazardous chemicals. **More than half of Nevada residents living within these “fenceline communities” are people of color.**
- **Children of color under age 12 are more than one-and-a-half times more likely to live in fenceline communities than white children.**
- **Poor black residents are almost three times more likely to live near hazardous facilities than non-poor whites.**

Chemical dangers are real, and incidents are happening in Nevada

In 2013, the Americold cold storage facility unintentionally released anhydrous ammonia, a toxic gas. Luckily no one was injured. But anhydrous ammonia can travel several miles from its source, and a major release could threaten the lives of nearby residents.

Americold uses **anhydrous ammonia** as a refrigerant, even though safer alternatives exist. Other facilities in Nevada using this deadly gas include food manufacturing and distribution facilities and fertilizer distributors.

Nevada also has electrical generation plants, metal smelting, and chemical manufacturing facilities, each storing extremely hazardous chemicals.

Nevada’s 46 high-risk facilities are primarily centered around urban areas like Carson City and Las Vegas. **Each receives shipments of dangerous chemicals**, which travel by rail or truck, putting additional communities in danger of a catastrophic disaster.

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

Compared to most states, Nevada has a relatively small proportion of its total population living within one mile of a hazardous facility (4.1 percent). However, children of color are more likely to live in fenceline communities than white children. For example, around **six-and-a-half percent of black and Latino children live in fenceline communities, compared to 3.5 percent of white children.** This means they are almost twice as likely to live near chemical hazards as white children.

However, being poor and a person of color increases these likelihoods even more. **Black residents in poverty are almost three times more likely to live in fenceline communities than non-poor whites.** The elderly poor are also more likely to live close to these dangerous facilities, and Nevada received an “F” grade for this category.

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.](#)

Additionally, 28 Nevada public schools are located within one mile of a hazardous chemical facility, putting over 21,000 children in danger of a chemical catastrophe. **Children of color are one-and-a-half times more likely to attend these schools.**

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	5.3%	B	Percentage of Poor People Who Live in Fenceline	5.8%	B
Likelihood of People of Color to Live in Fenceline (compared to whites)	1.7 times more likely	C	Likelihood of Poor People to Live in Fenceline (compared to those not in poverty)	1.5 times more likely	D
Percentage of Children of Color Under 12 Who Live in Fenceline	5.6%	B	Percentage of Poor Children Under 12 Who Live in Fenceline	5.9%	B
Likelihood of Children of Color Under 12 to Live in Fenceline (compared to white children under 12)	1.6 times more likely	B	Likelihood of Poor Children Under 12 to Live in Fenceline (compared to children under 12 not in poverty)	1.3 times more likely	B
Percentage of Children of Color Who Attend Public Schools in Fenceline	5.6%	B	Percentage of Children Receiving Free Lunch Who Attend Schools in Fenceline	6.1%	B
Likelihood of Children of Color to Attend Public Schools in Fenceline (compared to white children)	1.5 times more likely	D	Likelihood of Children Receiving Free Lunch to Attend Schools in Fenceline (compared to children not receiving free lunch)	1.4 times more likely	D
Percentage of Elderly of Color Who Live in Fenceline	4.3%	B	Percentage of Elderly Poor People Who Live in Fenceline	5%	B
Likelihood of Elderly of Color to Live in Fenceline (compared to elderly whites)	1.8 times more likely	C	Likelihood of Elderly Poor People to Live in Fenceline (compared to elderly people not in poverty)	1.8 times more likely	F
People of Color Grade		C	Poverty Grade		C
Overall Grade: C					

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

Nevada 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** Nevada 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 Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and the state-level OSHA to conduct more thorough and frequent inspections to spot problems before they cause disasters. And Nevada 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	6.9%	5.8%	2.6%	2.6%	3.1%	4.1%
0-17	6.7%	6.4%	2.2%	2.6%	3.5%	4.9%
18-64	7.0%	5.6%	2.8%	2.7%	3.1%	4.1%
65+	7.1%	4.3%	2.0%	2.4%	2.4%	2.9%
Total # in fenceline	15,015	42,361	743	5,722	44,139	110,499
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites	2.3	1.9	1.2 times less likely	1.2 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	8.8%	7.3%	2.6%	2.2%	3.8%	5.8%
0-17	7.0%	7.2%	0.6%	2.0%	4.0%	6.1%
18-64	9.8%	7.4%	3.9%	2.3%	3.7%	5.7%
65+	10.1%	8.2%	0.6%	2.0%	3.8%	5.0%
Total # in fenceline	4,736	11,929	179	525	5,540	23,380
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites in poverty	2.3	1.9	1.4 times less likely	1.7	---	---
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to same race not in poverty	1.4	1.3	Just as likely	1.2 times less likely	1.3	1.5
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites not in poverty	2.9	2.4	1.1 times less likely	1.3 times less likely	1.3	---

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	6.2%	6.3%	3.1%	2.6%	3.7%	4.9%
Pre-K - 2	7.3%	6.6%	2.1%	2.2%	2.7%	4.8%
3-7	6.3%	6.2%	3.6%	2.1%	3.0%	4.6%
8-12	5.4%	6.3%	3.1%	3.4%	4.9%	5.3%
Total # in fenceline	2,683	11,238	153	818	5,985	21,813
Likelihood of attending schools in fenceline, compared to white students	1.7	1.7	1.2 times less likely	1.4 times less likely	---	---

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