

Low-Income Residents and People of Color in New Hampshire 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. **New Hampshire scored above average with an “A” grade.**

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

Key Findings

- More than 16,000 New Hampshire residents (1.3 percent of the population) 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.
- Ten New Hampshire public schools are located within one mile of a hazardous facility, putting 5,400 students in danger.
- **Poor Asians and Pacific Islanders are over two times more likely to live in fenceline communities than white residents not in poverty.**

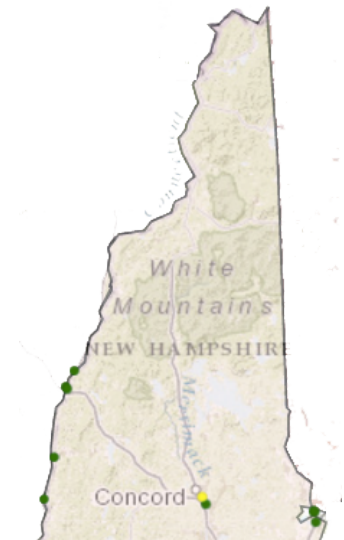
Chemical dangers are real, and recent incidents have happened in New Hampshire

In 2012, the High Liner Foods fish processing plant unintentionally leaked 200 pounds of anhydrous ammonia into the air. This toxic gas can be fatal at certain exposure levels and can travel several miles from its source. A major release would endanger the lives of nearby residents.

The High Liner facility stores up to 37,000 pounds of **anhydrous ammonia** at a time for use in its refrigeration system. Eight other facilities in New Hampshire also use the substance. Facilities can switch to safer chemical refrigerants (such as carbon dioxide), which would remove the danger to surrounding communities, but these facilities have continued to rely on toxic chemicals.

New Hampshire’s 13 high-risk facilities also include oil and gas distribution facilities, paper manufacturing, and electrical generation facilities. One chemical distribution facility stores up 950,000 pounds of **chlorine gas**. Chlorine is another fatal gas that can travel several miles from its source and can be used as a chemical weapon.

New Hampshire’s facilities are located in both urban and rural areas. **They receive shipments of chemicals that travel by rail or truck**, putting additional communities in danger.



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

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

New Hampshire (and neighboring Vermont) have the smallest percentages (1.3 percent) of their total populations living in fenceline communities, compared to all other states. New Hampshire is tied with Rhode Island for the second smallest number of facilities (13). The state also lacks high concentrations of facilities in major urban centers. These factors contribute to such a small percentage of New Hampshire’s population living near hazardous facilities – including people of color and poor populations.

Additionally, people of color are just as likely to live in fenceline communities as white residents. This is not too surprising when you take into account that New Hampshire is over 93 percent white and has a relatively small population of people of color. Thankfully, chemical hazards are not disproportionately affecting these populations.

New Hampshire’s poverty rate is roughly equivalent to the national average. Nationally, poor populations are more likely to live near chemical hazards than those above the poverty line. But in New Hampshire, they are slightly *less* likely. This suggests that New Hampshire lacks clusters of facilities near low-income neighborhoods, unlike many other states.

These factors all contributed to New Hampshire’s exemplary grade. However, that does not mean that the state lacks chemical hazards or racial and income disparities. For instance, when you consider race and poverty together, there are some surprising findings. **Poor Asians and Pacific Islanders are over two times more likely to live in fenceline communities than white non-poor residents.** These residents may lack the means to move to neighborhoods without chemical hazards.

Inequities in Likelihood of Living in a Fenceline Community

Racial Inequities			Income (Poverty) Inequities		
	Score	Grade		Score	Grade
Percentage of People of Color Who Live in Fenceline	1.3%	A	Percentage of Poor People Who Live in Fenceline	1.1%	A
Likelihood of People of Color to Live in Fenceline (compared to whites)	Just as likely	A	Likelihood of Poor People to Live in Fenceline (compared to those not in poverty)	1.2 times less likely	A
Percentage of Children of Color Under 12 Who Live in Fenceline	1%	A	Percentage of Poor Children Under 12 Who Live in Fenceline	0.7%	A
Likelihood of Children of Color Under 12 to Live in Fenceline (compared to white children under 12)	1.3 times less likely	A	Likelihood of Poor Children Under 12 to Live in Fenceline (compared to children under 12 not in poverty)	1.9 times less likely	A
Percentage of Children of Color Who Attend Public Schools in Fenceline	2%	A	Percentage of Children Receiving Free Lunch Who Attend Schools in Fenceline	1.4%	A
Likelihood of Children of Color to Attend Public Schools in Fenceline (compared to white children)	1.5 times less likely	A	Likelihood of Children Receiving Free Lunch to Attend Schools in Fenceline (compared to children not receiving free lunch)	2.5 times less likely	A
Percentage of Elderly of Color Who Live in Fenceline	1.2%	A	Percentage of Elderly Poor People Who Live in Fenceline	1.3%	A
Likelihood of Elderly of Color to Live in Fenceline (compared to elderly whites)	1.1 times less likely	A	Likelihood of Elderly Poor People to Live in Fenceline (compared to elderly people not in poverty)	Just as likely	A
People of Color Grade		A	Poverty Grade		A
Overall Grade: A					

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

New Hampshire 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* New Hampshire 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 New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and federal OSHA to conduct more thorough and frequent inspections to spot problems before they cause disasters. And New Hampshire 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	1.0%	1.3%	2.1%	1.7%	1.3%	1.3%
0-17	0.4%	1.1%	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%
18-64	1.2%	1.4%	2.1%	1.9%	1.3%	1.3%
65+	1.9%	0.9%	5.2%	1.1%	1.3%	1.3%
Total # in fenceline	144	478	53	472	15,392	16,718
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites	1.3 times less likely	Just as likely	1.6	1.3	---	---

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	0.7%	0.4%	4.5%	3.0%	1.1%	1.1%
0-17	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%	1.7%	1.0%	0.8%
18-64	1.0%	0.6%	6.2%	3.3%	1.2%	1.2%
65+	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	1.3%	1.3%
Total # in fenceline	24	31	14	108	1,054	1,249
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites in poverty	1.6 times less likely	2.7 times less likely	4.0	2.7	---	---
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to same race not in poverty	1.5 times less likely	3.6 times less likely	2.5	2.1	1.2 times less likely	1.2 times less likely
Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites not in poverty	1.9 times less likely	3.2 times less likely	3.4	2.3	1.2 times less likely	---

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	1.9%	1.6%	2.4%	3.0%	3.0%	2.9%
Pre-K - 2	1.6%	1.2%	2.8%	3.6%	2.5%	2.4%
3-7	1.7%	1.5%	2.4%	3.7%	2.8%	2.7%
8-12	2.3%	1.9%	2.2%	1.8%	3.5%	3.4%
Total # in fenceline	69	122	14	171	4,986	5,426
Likelihood of attending schools in fenceline, compared to white students	1.5 times less likely	1.9 times less likely	1.2 times less likely	1 times less likely	---	---

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