

Climate and Environmental Concerns in 2023's Hottest Housing Markets

March 2023

OVERVIEW

The U.S. housing market, buffeted by higher mortgage rates and affordability challenges, is shifting. In 2023, relatively affordable cities dominate Zillow's predictions for the hottest housing markets. Yet affordability is not the only thing on the minds of homebuyers and homeowners. As the impacts of intensifying climate and environmental risks continue to grow, **58% of U.S. homeowners have invested in making their homes more resilient to climate threats.**¹

Homebuyers and homeowners should be equipped with the information they need to make healthier and wiser choices. **AreaHub provides the tools to understand local environmental issues for any address in the United States.** From pollution to industrial hazards, extreme weather, and more, people can **uncover the impact that environmental hazards may have** on their health and property values.

Using the "10 Hottest Housing Markets in 2023" ranking² by Zillow®, AreaHub aggregated environmental issues in these cities across multiple data topics to help people and businesses make more informed choices about the locations on their radar.

\$165 billion

Last year was another intense year of costly disasters and extremes, with a price tag of at least \$165 billion in damages. According to NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information, there were 18 weather or climate disaster events in the United States in 2022 with losses exceeding \$1 billion each.³

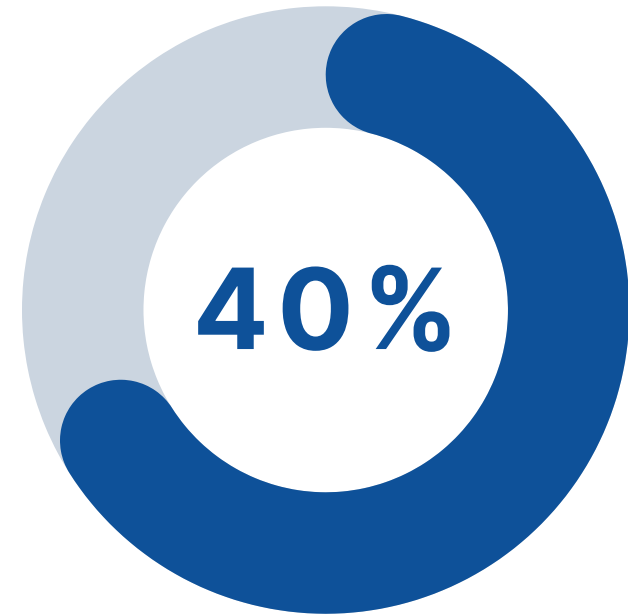


"In a world with a rapidly changing climate and increased environmental risks, we need reliable information about potential local hazards. Climate issues are becoming increasingly frequent and impactful. In 2022, damages from natural disasters totaled about \$165 billion in the U.S., according to NOAA. These climate issues may also exacerbate an area's pollution risks, such as if a contaminated site leaked toxic or hazardous chemicals due to flooding or wildfires."

Alison Gregory, AreaHub Co-Founder & CEO

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Oil, Gas, or Fracking Wells

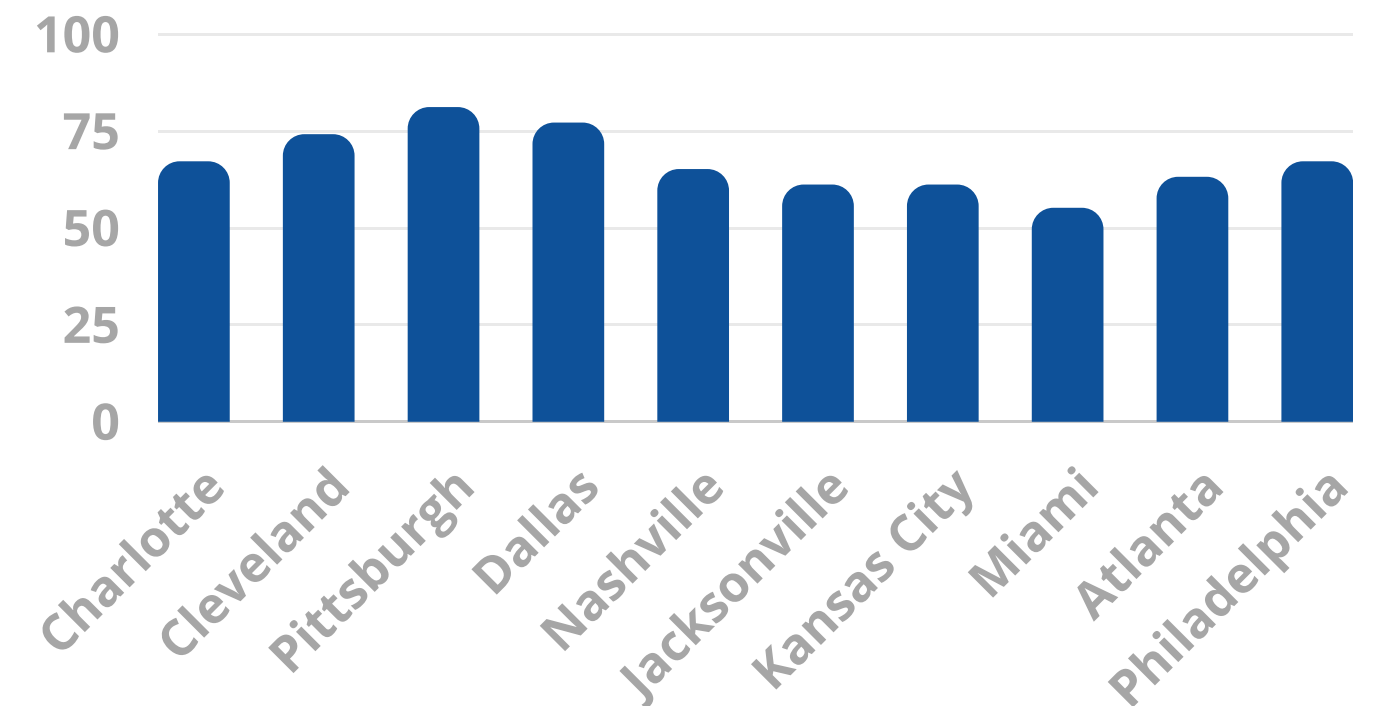


of the hottest real estate markets have oil, gas, or fracking wells nearby

40% of the markets on Zillow's list **contain oil, gas, or fracking wells** within five miles of their center. Cleveland has the highest number of wells out of the other cities on the list, with 97 wells within five miles of its center. There may be elevated health risks to living near a well due to groundwater contamination or air pollution.

None of the hottest real estate markets have a **“good” annual average air quality**, which would be an annual average air quality index at or below 50. All of the cities that made the list recently had a **“moderate”** annual average air quality, with Pittsburgh taking a top spot for worst air quality at an average annual air quality index of 81.

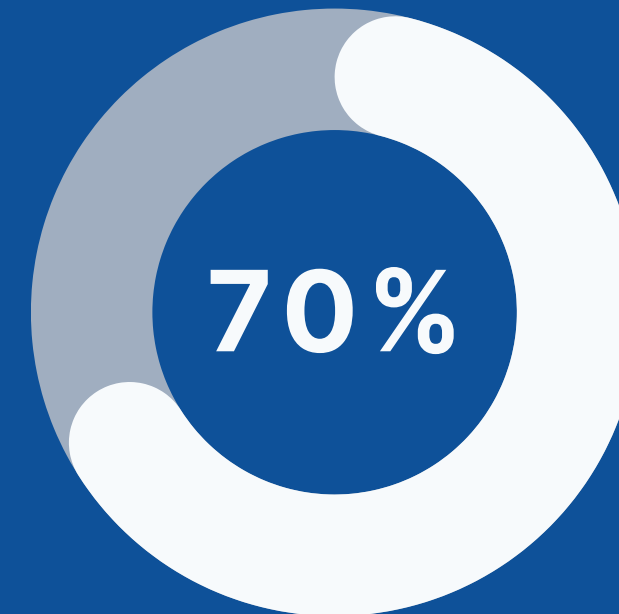
Average Air Quality Index



REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

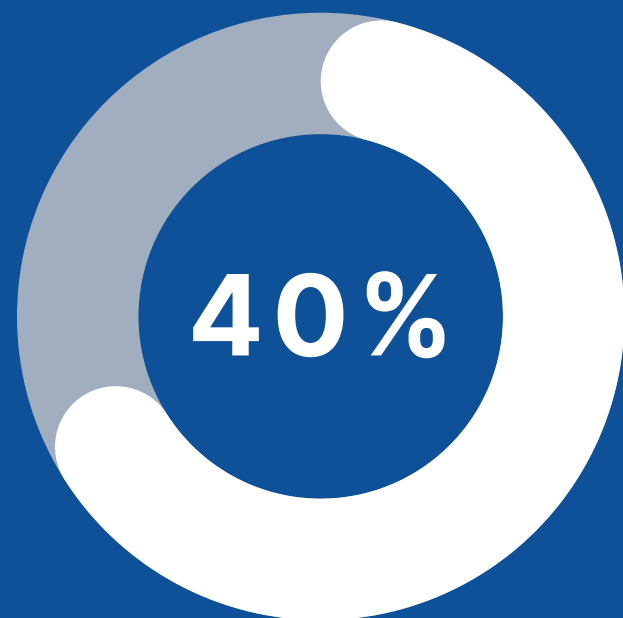
70% of the markets on Zillow's list **contain at least one Superfund site** within five miles of their center. Superfund sites are contaminated hazardous waste sites that, in some cases, impact health and/or property values. Philadelphia has the highest number of Superfund sites out of the other cities on the list, with three sites near its center.

Superfund Sites



of the hottest real estate markets contain at least one Superfund site

Indoor Radon



are located in counties with elevated average indoor radon levels

40% of the top cities are located in counties with **elevated average indoor radon levels**. Radon is an invisible and odorless gas that is responsible for over 20,000 cases of lung cancer annually,⁴ according to the EPA. Radon can affect everything from small houses to public housing projects. Modern homes, with fewer levels, high ceilings and more square footage, may actually be more likely to have higher concentrations of radon.

**Here are some of the top
environmental concerns
for the hottest real
estate markets of 2023 —→**

01. Charlotte, NC

Keep an eye out for...

Brownfields

Toxic Release Inventory Facilities*

Solid Waste Landfills*

Tornadoes

Ice Storms*

Power Plants*

High Voltage Lines

Air Quality

Charlotte is known for its small town feel, city skyline, and sizeable financial hub. With a lower-than-average cost of living and a large influx of job opportunities, Charlotte is predicted to be 2023's hottest housing market.

Environmental Highlights

Charlotte, also known as the 'Queen City,' has relatively **low industrial hazards** compared with other cities on Zillow's list. Although the city contains **31 brownfields**, it does not have Superfunds, wells, or natural gas pipelines within five miles of its city center. Brownfields are potentially contaminated properties that are often abandoned or unused. An Environmental Health Perspectives study⁵ found higher mortality rates from cancer and respiratory diseases in communities with the highest density of brownfields. Learn more about brownfields [here](#).

Additionally, Charlotte has **over 100 toxics release inventory (TRI) facilities*** within five miles of its city center. The EPA's TRI tracks facilities that use, manufacture or process significant quantities of toxic chemicals. Not all facilities producing and using chemicals are dangerous since this does not mean they had any toxic spills, but vulnerable populations may want to take precautions.⁶ Learn more about the toxics release inventory [here](#).

Other environmental considerations in Charlotte include solid waste landfills*, tornadoes, ice storms*, high voltage lines, natural gas pipelines, power plants*, and air quality.

*Topic available in AreaHub's paid plans only

Cleveland, one of the major cities of the Great Lakes region, is home to several major cultural institutions and iconic sports teams.

Environmental Highlights

Cleveland, also known as 'Forest City,' has **97 oil, gas, or fracking wells*** within five miles of its center, the most of any city on the list. Nearly 18 million Americans live within one mile of a well.⁷ Emerging evidence hints that living within a mile of a well may be associated with health issues possibly caused by air pollution or groundwater contamination. If you live near ongoing oil and gas activity, it is a good idea to find out what type of activity is taking place and, if necessary, consider water filtration and/or a quality [air purifier](#) in your home. Learn more about wells [here](#).

Cleveland doesn't only rank first for wells, it also has **the most toxics release inventory (TRI) facilities*** compared to others on the list, with 180 facilities within five miles of its city center. Not all TRI facilities are dangerous since this does not mean they had any toxic spills, but vulnerable populations (like pregnant mothers and children) may want to take precautions. Learn more about TRI facilities [here](#).

Other environmental considerations in Cleveland include power plants*, Superfund sites, natural gas pipelines, high voltage lines, cell towers, solid waste landfills*, and indoor radon.

02. Cleveland, OH

Keep an eye out for...

*Oil, Gas, and Fracking Wells

*Toxic Release Inventory Facilities

*Power Plants

Superfund Sites

Natural Gas Pipelines

*Solid Waste Landfills

Indoor Radon

Air Quality

High Voltage Lines

Cell Towers

03. Pittsburgh, PA

Keep an eye out for...

Indoor Radon

Air Quality

Brownfields

Natural Gas Pipelines

Oil, Gas, and Fracking Wells*

Toxic Release Inventory Facilities*

Power Plants*

Solid Waste Landfills*

*Topic available in AreaHub's paid plans only

Pittsburgh, a historical industrial hub, boasts beautiful bridges, top-ranked universities, and passionate sports fans.

Environmental Highlights

Pittsburgh, also known as 'Steel City,' had an **average air quality index of 81 (moderate)**, the poorest out of any city on the list. Moderate air quality is considered acceptable by the EPA, but there may be a risk for those unusually sensitive to air pollution. Breathing polluted air may have health effects. Prolonged exposure to higher levels of air pollution is known to cause permanent lung damage and reduce lifespan.⁸ To limit the effects of air pollution on your health, keep track of the AQI and reduce your exposure and exertion levels when air pollution levels are high. Learn more about air pollution [here](#).

Pittsburgh is also a Radon Zone 1, which means there is a **high potential for unsafe indoor radon levels**. Radon is an invisible and odorless gas that is responsible for over 20,000 cases of lung cancer annually, according to the EPA.⁹ Radon can invade a home or business, so test regularly to monitor radon levels. Learn more about radon [here](#).

Other environmental considerations in Pittsburgh include brownfields, natural gas pipelines, oil, gas, and fracking wells*, toxic release inventory facilities*, power plants*, and solid waste landfills*.

One of the largest metropolitan areas in the country, Dallas is known for its Texas barbecue, lively restaurant scene and nightlife, and historic landmarks.

Environmental Highlights

Dallas, the third largest city in Texas, has a **high density of high voltage lines** within five miles of its center, compared to other cities on the list. Although there is no evidence of a clear link to health risks, research has not demonstrated living near high voltage lines is entirely safe, either.¹⁰ Learn more about high voltage lines [here](#).

Dallas is also **prone to hail**,* with a very high annual frequency of hail occurrences compared to other cities nationwide, according to FEMA's National Risk Index. The city also has a **high risk of tornadoes**.*

Other environmental considerations in Dallas include air quality, brownfields, natural gas pipelines, oil, gas, and fracking wells,* toxic release inventory facilities,* power plants,* and solid waste landfills.*

04. Dallas, TX

Keep an eye out for...

High Voltage Lines

*Hail

*Tornadoes

Brownfields

Superfund Sites

Natural Gas Pipelines

*Oil, Gas, and Fracking Wells

*Toxic Release Inventory Facilities

*Solid Waste Landfills

Air Quality

A night-time photograph of the Nashville skyline, featuring several illuminated skyscrapers. The AT&T building is prominent on the right side. The sky is a deep blue, and the city lights create a vibrant contrast.

05. Nashville, TN

Keep an eye out for...

Indoor Radon

Oil, Gas, and Fracking Wells*

Solid Waste Landfills*

High Voltage Lines

Brownfields

Toxic Release Inventory Facilities*

Air Quality

*Topic available in AreaHub's paid plans only

Nashville, widely known as 'Music City,' is the home to country music and a variety of restaurants, distilleries, and a thriving entertainment scene.

Environmental Highlights

Although Tennessee's capital doesn't take the top spot for any hazards on the list, it does have a number of environmental hazards to watch out for. For instance, Nashville has a **high potential for unsafe indoor radon levels**. Radon is an invisible and odorless gas that is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers in the U.S. Radon can invade a home or business, so if you are buying a property, insist on a radon test. The EPA estimates that nearly one in 15 U.S. homes have elevated radon levels, so test regularly to monitor radon levels.¹¹ Learn more about radon [here](#).

Nashville also has **10 oil, gas, or fracking wells*** and **many high voltage lines** within five miles of its center, higher than most cities on the list. Additionally, it has a **high risk of riverine floods and tornadoes***, according to FEMA's National Risk Index.

Other environmental considerations in Nashville include solid waste landfills*, brownfields, air quality, and toxic release inventory facilities*.

Located on Florida's Atlantic shoreline, Jacksonville has more than 22 miles of beach and access to the St. Johns River. The city is known for its thriving art scene, craft beer, and fresh seafood.

Environmental Highlights

Although Jacksonville doesn't take the top spot for any hazards considered on the list, it does have a number of environmental hazards to watch out for. For instance, Jacksonville has **two Superfund sites** and **12 brownfields** within five miles of its center. Superfund sites are contaminated hazardous waste sites. The national Superfund list includes abandoned factories, mining operations, toxic waste dumps, and other sites with uncontained materials deemed dangerous. Learn more about Superfunds [here](#). Brownfields are potentially contaminated properties that are often abandoned or unused. Learn more about brownfields [here](#).

The most populous city in Florida also has a **moderate risk of riverine and coastal flooding**. Floods are the most widespread of all weather-related natural disasters.¹² Read more about floods [here](#).

Other environmental considerations in Jacksonville include power plants*, natural gas pipelines, solid waste landfills*, facilities in the toxics release inventory*, air quality, and high voltage lines.

06. Jacksonville, FL

Keep an eye out for...

- Superfund Sites
- Brownfields
- Flooding
- Natural Gas Pipelines
- *Power Plants
- *Solid Waste Landfills
- Air Quality
- *Toxic Release Inventory Facilities
- High Voltage Lines

07. Kansas City, MO

Keep an eye out for...

Brownfields

Indoor Radon

Oil, Gas, and Fracking Wells*

Power Plants*

Superfund Sites

Heatwaves*

Air Quality

Toxic Release Inventory Facilities*

Kansas City, also known as the 'Barbecue Capital of the World' is famous for its more than 200 fountains, vibrant jazz scene, and of course, barbecue restaurants.

Environmental Highlights

There are **399 brownfield sites** within five miles of Kansas City's center, the most of any city on the list. Brownfields are potentially contaminated properties that are often abandoned or unused. The three most common contaminants found in brownfields are lead, petroleum, and asbestos. A study published in Environmental Health Perspectives found significantly higher rates of mortality from cancer and respiratory diseases in communities with the highest density of brownfield sites.¹³ Although brownfields can devalue nearby properties, nearby property values can rebound once the brownfield is cleaned up and redeveloped. Learn more about brownfields [here](#).

Kansas City also has **five power plants*** and **four oil, gas, or fracking wells*** within five miles of its center, higher than many other cities on the list. Additionally, it has a **high risk of heatwaves*** and a moderate risk for tornadoes*, strong winds*, ice storms*, and winter weather, according to FEMA's National Risk Index.

Other environmental considerations in Kansas City include **high average indoor radon**, Superfund sites, natural gas pipelines, toxic release inventory facilities*, and high voltage lines.

*Topic available in AreaHub's paid plans only

Miami is beloved for its sparkling beaches, year-round warm weather, thriving nightlife, and Latin American influence.

Environmental Highlights

Miami has **seven solid waste landfills** within five miles of its city center, tied with Philadelphia for the most of any city on the list. A solid waste landfill is “a discrete area of land or excavation that receives household waste” and may also receive other types of non-hazardous waste, according to the EPA.¹⁴ Some studies suggest living near landfills may be tied to an increase in the risk of adverse health effects.

The city, famously referred to as ‘the 305,’ also has **337 brownfields** and **two Superfund sites** within five miles of its city center, along with two power plants and one natural gas pipeline. Additionally, while Miami has a **moderate risk of hurricanes and tornadoes**, it has a **high risk of flooding**. Flooding causes an average of \$5 billion in damage each year in the US, more than any other severe weather-related event.¹⁵ Read more about extreme weather events [here](#).

Other environmental considerations in Miami include facilities in the toxic release inventory*, air quality, average indoor radon, high voltage lines and cell towers.

08. Miami, FL

Keep an eye out for...

- *Solid Waste Landfills
- Superfund Sites
- Brownfields
- *Power Plants
- Flooding
- Hurricanes
- *Tornadoes
- Natural Gas Pipelines

9. Atlanta, GA

Keep an eye out for...

Indoor Radon

Power Plants*

Brownfields

Superfund Sites

Natural Gas Pipelines

High Voltage Lines

Toxic Release Inventory Facilities*

*Topic available in AreaHub's paid plans only

Sometimes referred to as the 'Hollywood of the South,' Atlanta is a city rich in history and culture with a lively food and entertainment scene.

Environmental Highlights

Although Georgia's capital doesn't take the top spot for any hazards on the list, it does have a number of environmental issues to watch out for. For instance, Atlanta has **10 power plants***, **six solid waste landfills***, and **82 brownfields** within five miles of its city center, along with one Superfund site and one natural gas pipeline.

Atlanta also has a **high potential for unsafe indoor radon levels**. Radon is an invisible and odorless gas that is responsible for over 20,000 cases of lung cancer annually, according to the EPA.¹⁶ Radon can invade a home or business, so if you are buying a property, insist on a radon test. Also, test regularly to monitor radon levels. Learn more about radon [here](#).

Other environmental considerations in Atlanta include hail*, toxic release inventory facilities*, high voltage lines, and cell towers.

Philadelphia, one of the country's most preeminent historical cities, is famously known for its iconic Liberty Bell and cheesesteaks.

Environmental Highlights

Philadelphia has the most power plants out of any city on the list, with **14 power plants within five miles of its center**. Most are natural gas plants or solar plants, along with a few petroleum plants and one biomass plant. While some power plants are cleaner than others, many may have an impact on the environment and surrounding areas. When living near a power plant, it's important to know its type of activity and the emissions that may be released from it. Learn more about power plants [here](#).

Additionally, Philadelphia has **three Superfund sites within five miles of its center**, the most of any city on the list. Superfund sites are contaminated hazardous waste sites. The national Superfund list includes abandoned factories, mining operations, toxic waste dumps, and other sites with uncontained materials deemed dangerous. If you live near a Superfund, you may want to learn about the hazardous materials there, how much has been cleaned up, and consider if you want to take any steps to mitigate your risk from exposure. Learn more about Superfund sites [here](#).

Other environmental considerations in Philadelphia include **solid waste landfills***, **natural gas pipelines**, brownfields, heatwaves*, winter weather*, air quality, and toxic release inventory facilities.*

10. Philadelphia, PA

Keep an eye out for...

- *Power Plants
- Superfund Sites
- *Solid Waste Landfills
- Natural Gas Pipelines
- *Toxic Release Inventory Facilities
- Brownfields
- *Heatwaves
- Winter Weather
- Air Quality



About AreaHub

AreaHub's climate and environmental platform informs individuals and businesses with clearly presented, scientific, and locally-relevant climate and environmental information to help them make more informed decisions. AreaHub is a tool to prepare "for what nature might throw at you."¹⁷

By leveraging their managerial, data processing, and startup experience, the co-founders launched AreaHub to help people and businesses make healthier and wiser decisions in a world with intensifying natural hazards and increasing environmental risks.

AreaHub offers Basic, Pro, Premium, and Enterprise plans with different levels of information and features. To find out more about AreaHub's plans, [click here](#).

To learn more about AreaHub, visit AreaHub.com

Data Topics

[AreaHub](#) aggregates dozens of credibly-sourced, science-based datasets to provide climate and environmental health information for 30+ data topics

NATURAL	INDUSTRIAL	POLLUTION	INFRASTRUCTURE	
coastal flooding cold waves** droughts earthquakes hail* heat waves* high winds** hurricanes	ice storms* landslides* lightning** riverine flooding strong winds* tornadoes* winter weather wildfires	superfund sites brownfields natural gas pipelines oil, gas & fracking wells*	radon air quality ground level ozone* particulate matter* toxic releases*	cell towers high voltage lines solid waste landfills* nuclear reactors* power plants* underground storage tanks**

*Data available with [AreaHub Pro](#), [AreaHub Premium](#) or [AreaHub Enterprise](#) | **Data only available with [AreaHub Enterprise](#)

Methodology & Disclaimer

AreaHub aggregated environmental issues across multiple data topics for the cities on Zillow's "10 Hottest Housing Markets in 2023" ranking. Using publicly available datasets provided by credible sources, AreaHub uses a proprietary geospatial algorithm that incorporates data from a variety of accepted third-party sources. The report results depend on location and the availability and accuracy of the data available in a particular region. Some areas have more detailed information than others.

Additionally, some datasets are more location-specific than others. For example, natural hazard results are based on census tracts, while industrial hazard results are based on a 5-mile radius from the center point of the search.

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