



GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM LARGE FACILITIES

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS



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Environment and Climate Change Canada
Public Inquiries Centre
12th Floor Fontaine Building
200 Sacré-Coeur Blvd
Gatineau QC K1A 0H3
Telephone: 1-800-668-6767 (in Canada only) or 819-938-3860
Email: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca

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CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS

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April 2022

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Greenhouse gas emissions from large facilities

Releases of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and their increasing concentrations in the atmosphere are leading to a changing climate. This change has an impact on the environment, human health and the economy. This indicator tracks GHG emissions from the largest emitting facilities in Canada. The indicator complements the [Greenhouse gas emissions](#) indicators and provides information on an important source of Canada's industrial GHG emissions.

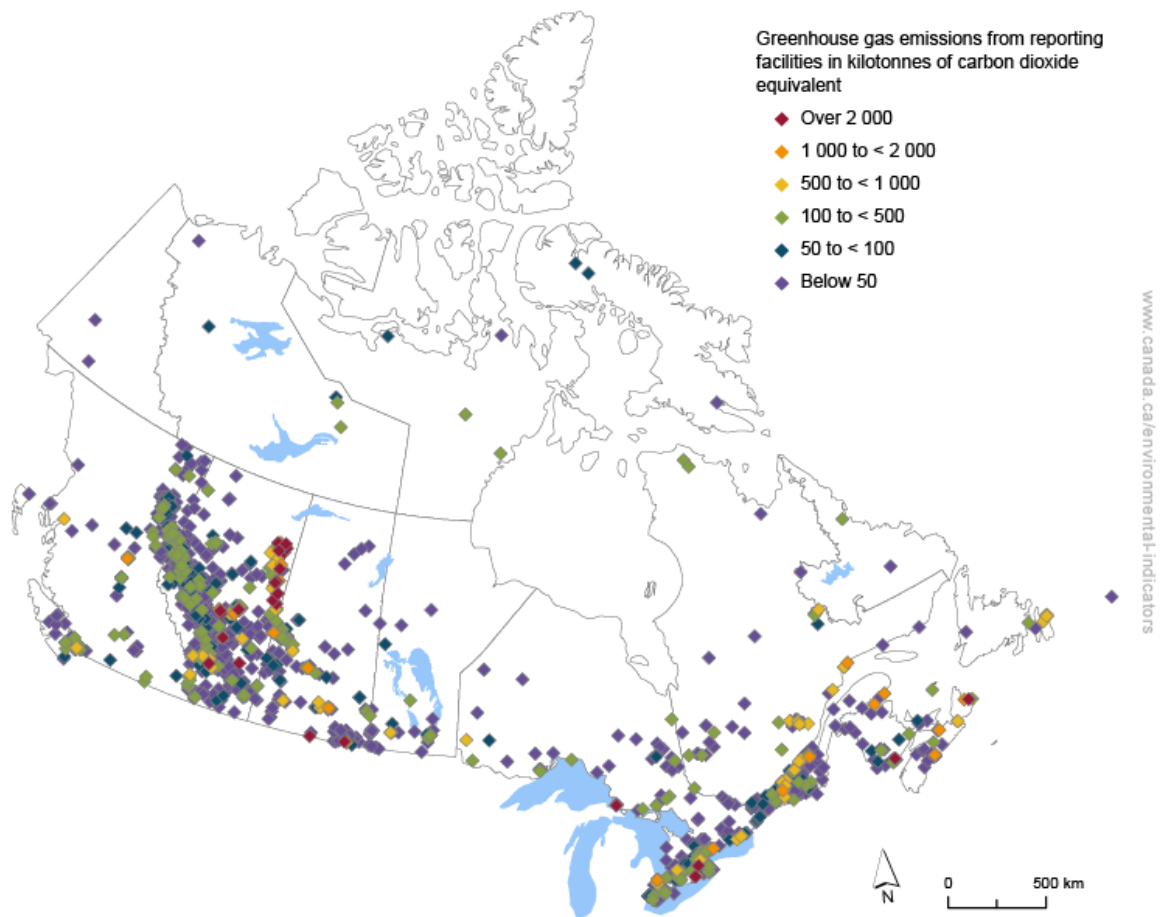
The latest reporting year (2020) coincides with the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which deeply affected a wide range of industrial sectors. The results must be interpreted with caution as the pandemic impacted facility operations in 2020 to some extent (for example, temporary shut downs and reduced demand) but other factors also contributed to observed emission changes (such as, lower coal consumption due to fuel switching and production slow-downs).

Key results

In 2020,

- 273 megatonnes (Mt) of GHGs in carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂ eq) were emitted by 1 704 facilities reporting to the Government of Canada's GHG Reporting Program
- emissions from the reporting facilities accounted for 41% of Canada's total GHG emissions

Figure 1. Greenhouse gas emissions from large facilities, Canada, 2020



Navigate data using the [interactive map](#)

[Data for Figure 1](#)

Source: Environment and Climate Change Canada (2022) [Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program - Overview of 2020 Reported Emissions](#).

Total facility-reported GHG emissions in 2020 were 7% lower than the reported total for 2019. Although the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the decrease in emissions, factors such as reduced coal consumption, fuel switching and lower production levels, impacted emissions to a larger degree. In addition, there were less facilities reporting to the GHG Reporting Program compared to the previous year¹ (1 704 compared to 1 732). Of the total,

- 133 facilities with emissions below 10 kilotonnes (kt) reported voluntarily²
- 1 035 facilities reported emissions in the 10 to 50 kt range
- 205 facilities reported emissions in the 50 to 100 kt range
- 218 facilities reported emissions in the 100 to 500 kt range
- 56 facilities reported emissions in the 500 to 1 000 kt range
- 57 facilities reported emissions over 1 000 kt

For facilities reporting emissions of 50 kt or more, total emissions decreased by 28 Mt (10%) from 2005 to 2020 while the number of reporting facilities with emissions of 50 kt or more increased from 323 to 536 over this same period.³

In 2020, mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction accounted for 41% of facility-reported emissions; manufacturing, 30%; and utilities, 22%. For comparison in 2005, mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction accounted for 17% of facility-reported emissions; manufacturing, 33%; and utilities, 44%. Since 2005, emissions from facilities in the utilities and manufacturing sectors have declined, while emissions from facilities in the mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction sector have steadily increased.

About the indicator

What the indicator measures

The indicator reports total GHG emissions from the largest GHG emitters in Canada for the 2020 reporting year.

In March 2004, the Government of Canada announced the introduction of the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program to annually collect emission information for facilities across Canada. Unlike Canada's National Inventory Report, which compiles GHG data at the national and provincial/territorial levels and covers all GHG sources and sinks in Canada, the GHG Reporting Program applies only to specific emission sources that exist at large GHG-emitting facilities (industrial and other types of facilities).

The GHG Reporting Program requires all facilities that emit the equivalent of 10 000 tonnes (10 kilotonnes) or more of GHGs (in carbon dioxide equivalent units) per year to submit a report to Environment and Climate Change Canada. Mandatory reporting of GHG emissions by facilities was established by the Minister of the Environment under the authority of section 46 of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*.

Why this indicator is important

The release of GHGs and their increasing concentrations in the atmosphere are having significant impacts on the environment, human health and the economy. The indicator informs the public and decision makers on the release of GHG emissions from the largest emitting facilities in Canada. Consult [Greenhouse gas emissions: drivers and impacts](#) for information on the human health, environmental and economic impacts of greenhouse gas emissions.

The GHG Reporting Program ensures that the GHG emissions from Canada's largest emitters are tracked and reported. This mandatory reporting contributes to the development, implementation and evaluation of climate change and energy policies and strategies in Canada.

¹ The number of facilities reporting from 1 year to the next can be affected by facilities not meeting the reporting threshold, facility closures, shut-down periods and new operations starting up.

² The GHG Reporting Program requires all facilities that emit the equivalent of 10 000 tonnes (10 kilotonnes) or more of GHGs (in carbon dioxide equivalent units) per year to submit a report to Environment and Climate Change Canada. Facilities with emissions below 10 kilotonnes per year can voluntarily report their GHG emissions.

³ The increase in the number of facilities reporting emissions is partly due to reporting threshold changes. In 2009, the reporting threshold lowered from 100 kilotonnes to 50 kilotonnes and in 2017, it was further reduced from 50 kilotonnes to 10 kilotonnes.

Greenhouse gas emissions data reported through the GHG Reporting Program are used to inform the development of estimates of GHG emissions in Canada in the National Inventory Report, and to support regulatory initiatives.

Related indicators

The [Greenhouse gas emissions](#) indicators report trends in total anthropogenic (human-made) GHG emissions at the national level, per person and per unit gross domestic product, by province and territory and by economic sector.

The [Global greenhouse gas emissions](#) indicator provides a global perspective on Canada's share of global GHG emissions.

The [Carbon dioxide emissions from a consumption perspective](#) indicator shows the impact of Canada's consumption of goods and services, regardless of where they are produced, on the levels of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere.

The [Progress towards Canada's greenhouse gas emissions reduction target](#) indicator provides an overview of Canada's projected GHG emissions up to 2030.

The [Land-based greenhouse gas emissions and removals](#) indicator tracks exchanges of GHG emissions and removals between the atmosphere and Canada's managed lands.

The [Greenhouse gas concentrations](#) indicators present atmospheric concentrations as measured from sites in Canada and at a global scale for 2 greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide and methane.

Data sources and methods

Data sources

The data used in the indicator are from Environment and Climate Change Canada's [Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program](#).

More information

The Greenhouse gas emissions from large facilities indicator uses data from the GHG Reporting Program. The data are collected on an annual basis. Facilities are required to report their GHG emissions to Environment and Climate Change Canada by June 1 of each year.

The GHG Reporting Program provides local GHG emissions data from large emitters in Canada (those producing 10 kilotonnes (kt) or more of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions per year). Facilities with emissions below 10 kt per year can voluntarily report their GHG emissions.

Starting with the 2017 reporting year, the GHG reporting threshold was lowered from 50 kt to 10 kt. As a result, more facilities were required to report their emissions compared to the previous years. Additional changes made included expanded data and prescribed methodological requirements for facilities in targeted industry sectors. See [Canada's Greenhouse Gas Quantification Requirements](#) for more information.

The Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators' [interactive map](#) provides facility GHG data for the years 2004 to 2020.

Methods

The quantity of GHGs released by each facility is calculated or measured by the reporting facility. The methods used to determine emissions are based on monitoring or direct measurement, mass balance, emission factors, engineering estimates and/or fuel and activity data. See the [Technical guidance on reporting greenhouse gas emissions](#) for more information.

More information

Environment and Climate Change Canada requires facilities involved in certain industrial activities to follow prescribed methods to determine their emissions. This is part of the reporting program's expansion initiated in 2017 to improve the quality and usability of the facility data. For reporting facilities that are not subject to the expanded requirements, they can choose the quantification methodologies most appropriate to their particular industry or application. However, these facilities must use methods for estimating emissions that are consistent with the guidelines developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and adopted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for the preparation of national GHG inventories. See the [Technical guidance on reporting greenhouse gas emissions](#) for more information.

Caveats and limitations

A facility is required to report to the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program only if its GHG emissions exceed the reporting threshold of 10 000 tonnes (10 kilotonnes) in carbon dioxide equivalent for a given year. Since 2004, there have been 2 changes to the reporting threshold. In 2009, the reporting threshold was lowered from 100 kilotonnes to 50 kilotonnes and in 2017, it was further reduced from 50 kilotonnes to 10 kilotonnes.

Comparisons among years may be made, bearing in mind that some facilities might not have been required to report in years for which they did not exceed the reporting threshold. Attention to consistency and comparability in the dataset is needed when comparing emissions from year to year. Observed changes in reported emissions may be due to actual changes in emissions or revisions of data from facilities and additional emissions reported from facilities that are newly reporting their emissions (for example, due to the changes in the reporting threshold).

Different facilities in a given type of industry may also use different methods for estimating emissions.

For more information on the caveats and limitations with respect to facility-reported greenhouse gas emissions data, refer to the [Overview of 2020 Reported Emissions](#).

Resources

References

Environment and Climate Change Canada (2021) [Reporting greenhouse gas emissions data: Technical guidance 2020](#). Retrieved on March 30, 2022.

Environment and Climate Change Canada (2022) [Facility Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program - Overview of 2020 Reported Emissions](#). Retrieved on April 14, 2022.

Related information

[Greenhouse gas emissions: drivers and impacts](#)

[Canada's action on climate change](#)

[Climate change](#)

Additional information can be obtained at:

Environment and Climate Change Canada
Public Inquiries Centre
12th Floor Fontaine Building
200 Sacré-Coeur Blvd
Gatineau QC K1A 0H3
Telephone: 1-800-668-6767 (in Canada only) or 819-938-3860
Email: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca