

# FRANCE

## LANCET COUNTDOWN ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE DATA SHEET 2025

### Health and climate change in France

The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change tracks the evolving relationship between climate and health through 50+ peer-reviewed indicators. Since 2016, it has provided peer-reviewed annual assessments, published in *The Lancet*. The 2025 report reveals the grave health toll of climate change inaction: fossil fuel dependence, rising emissions, and delayed adaptation are costing millions of lives. Recent climate policy rollbacks further threaten our ability to respond to the accelerating crisis, undermining progress towards a healthy future.

This document highlights key country-level findings from the 2025 Lancet Countdown report for France, showing that:



**Heat exposure** continues to escalate, putting growing pressure on population health and outdoor activity safety across France.



**Wildfires, drought, and coastal warming are intensifying**, compounding health risks from air pollution, waterborne disease, and ecosystem degradation.



Despite progress in reducing emissions, **transition readiness is slipping**, with declining preparedness and continued fossil-fuel fiscal support undermining France's path to net zero.

With the threats of climate change growing, protecting people's health and survival demands simultaneous and unprecedented efforts to advance adaptation and mitigation, and requires an "all hands on deck" approach.

### Escalating heat exposure and unsafe conditions for physical activity

France continues to experience sharp increases in heat exposure, particularly among older adults, infants, and people engaging in outdoor activities. The data highlight that heat is becoming a consistent and widespread threat to population health and productivity, with little sign of adaptation keeping pace. According to Santé publique France, the summer of 2024 ranked as the eighth hottest since 1900, with heatwaves affecting 43 départements and around 40% of the population for nearly five days on average. More than 17 000 emergency visits and an estimated 3 700 deaths were attributed to heat exposure.\*\*

#### RECORD-BREAKING SUMMERS TEST RESILIENCE ACROSS FRANCE

Heatwaves have repeatedly challenged public-health systems, with multiple départements under prolonged heat alerts in recent years. The 2024 summer brought concurrent agricultural, health, and energy impacts. National surveillance during this period also showed that older adults accounted for more than half of heat-related emergency visits and three-quarters of heat-attributable deaths.\*\* This prompts renewed calls for urban greening, expanded early-warning systems, and occupational-safety adaptation plans. Sustained behavioural and infrastructural adaptation will be essential to reduce vulnerability as temperatures continue to rise.



In 2024, people in France were exposed to 12 heatwave days each, on average. Of these, 9 (75%) would not have been expected to occur without climate change. (Indicator 1.1.1)



In 2024, individuals in France were exposed to 149.9 hours per person of at least moderate heat stress risk during exercise, 127% higher than the 1990-1999 average. This can compromise safe outdoor activity and occupational performance. (Indicator 1.1.2)



In 2024, heat exposure resulted in a loss of 90 million potential labour hour, 111% more than in 1990-1999. The construction sector accounted for 47% of the losses in 2024. (Indicator 1.1.3)



France lost 86,280 hectares of tree cover in 2023, reducing natural cooling and shade, amplifying heat stress during extreme temperature events and increasing risks to health and ecosystems. (Indicator 3.4)

## Wildfire smoke and drought pressures on health

Climate-related hazards in France increasingly converge, with prolonged droughts amplifying wildfire risk and worsening air quality. While 2024 saw fewer wildfire exposure days, the long-term increase in smoke-related mortality and particulate concentrations reflects growing health threats under a warmer, drier climate. This points to greater health risks across large parts of France, especially in southern regions affected by recurrent summer fires.



From 2020–2024, an average of 44.6% of French land experienced at least one month of extreme drought per year, 148% higher than 1951–1960. (Indicator 1.2.2.) This illustrates a shift towards more severe and recurrent dry periods that degrade soil, ecosystems, and water security.



Wildfire-related fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) caused an estimated 700 deaths per year on average between 2020–2024, which is a 55% increase from 2003–2012 levels. In 2024, 656 deaths were attributed to wildfire smoke, still 45% higher than the baseline, highlighting persistent health risks even in years with fewer fire events. (Indicator 1.2.1)

## Coastal warming and climate-sensitive infectious disease risk

Rising sea-surface temperatures and expanding pathogen habitats are heightening infectious-disease risks along France's extensive coastline. The warming trend in the Atlantic and Mediterranean waters supports the spread of *Vibrio* bacteria, posing growing public-health challenges for coastal residents and visitors.



Average sea-surface temperatures around France reached 16.0 °C in 2022–2024, representing a 7.6% increase from the 1981–2010 baseline. In 2024, the seas were 1.0°C warmer than the historical average, intensifying risks of harmful algal blooms and bacterial proliferation. (Indicator 1.4)



In 2024, France saw an estimated 2,700 *Vibrio* cases, a 78% rise compared with 1990–1999. France also had a 384% increase in the coastal length exposed to *Vibrio* risk. These infections, often associated with warmer waters and shellfish consumption, underscore the growing intersection between ocean warming and health outcomes in France. (Indicator 1.3.6) In addition, France has seen a sharp rise in autochthonous arboviral infections transmitted by *Aedes albopictus*, including 729 chikungunya cases across 78 clusters in 2025.\*\*\*

## Transition progress versus policy and fiscal misalignment

France has made headway in decarbonising its energy system, with coal nearly phased out and household reliance on electricity rising. Yet declining preparedness scores and ongoing fossil-fuel fiscal support signal misalignment between long-term climate targets and near-term policy implementation.



Between 2016 and 2022, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuel combustion fell by 8%. As of 2022, coal makes up 2.4% of total energy and 0.9% of electricity energy. As of 2022, renewable energy made up 2.7% of total energy supply, doubling the share since 2016. (Indicator 3.1.1) In 2022, 39% of household energy came from electricity; however, 28% came from natural gas. (Indicator 3.1.2)



France's net-zero preparedness index fell by 4.8% from 2023 to 2024, suggesting weakening policy alignment with climate commitments. (Indicator 4.2.4) In 2023, France still subsidised fossil fuels, with a net total subsidy of \$25.1 bn, equivalent to 6.6% of health expenditure. indicating continued net fossil-fuel subsidies that undermine climate and health co-benefits. (Indicator 4.3.2)

Romanello M, Walawender M, Hsu S-C, et al. The 2025 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change. Lancet 2025; published online Oct 29. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(25\)01919-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(25)01919-1).

\*\*Santé publique France. Chaleur et santé: Bilan de l'été 2024. Édition France hexagonale. Saint-Maurice: Santé publique France; 2025. 16 p.

\*\*\*Santé publique France. Chikungunya, dengue, Zika et West Nile en France hexagonale : Bulletin de la surveillance renforcée du 15 octobre 2025. Saint-Maurice (FR): Santé publique France; 2025. 21 p.

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For further information, visit [lancetcountdown.org](http://lancetcountdown.org)