



# WILDFIRE SMOKE INFORMATION

*A joint message from the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD) and partners*

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## 2021 Pre-Season Wildfire Smoke Information

The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD), in coordination with the Public Health Departments of Humboldt, Del Norte, Trinity Counties and regional Tribal Health Departments, provide the following information to help prepare for smoke impacts during wildfire events.

This year, the NCUAQMD will issue a single combined **Air Quality (AQ) Smoke Advisory** notification document during wildfire events, rather than the separate documents (e.g., the PSA, Advisory, Alert) done in prior years. This comprehensive AQ Smoke Advisory will indicate the Air Quality Index (AQI) levels of concern (Hazardous, Unhealthy, Moderate, etc.) for communities for which there is acceptable forecast information. During wildfire events, AQ Smoke Advisories will be updated as conditions change. If your location is within an area impacted by wildfire smoke, please watch for the AQ Smoke Advisory via our email distribution and on our website at [www.ncuaqmd.org](http://www.ncuaqmd.org).

The NCUAQMD maintains an **email distribution list** for sending AQ Smoke Advisory notifications. AQ Smoke Advisories are sent to media sources, schools and the general public. To request addition or deletion to the notification list, please contact the NCUAQMD at (707) 443-3093 or email [wildfire@ncuaqmd.org](mailto:wildfire@ncuaqmd.org).

The NCUAQMD, California Air Resources Board (CARB), and the EPA highly recommend using the EPA's Fire & Smoke Map (<https://fire.airnow.gov>) for air quality smoke impacts and current AQI information. Although there are alternative websites with similar information, this website provides the best information for viewing smoke maps, deployed PM<sub>2.5</sub> wildfire monitors, and corrected sensor information. The NCUAQMD website also provides links to the latest and most accurate information available on wildfire smoke impacts and how to protect yourself from smoke. If you have health concerns, are elderly, pregnant, or have a child in your care, consider talking with your doctor now about what to do if the air becomes smoky. Even healthy adults can be affected by smoke and preparation prior to a smoke event is recommended.

The NCUAQMD also provides a [Wildfire Smoke Guidance and Recommended Activity Guide for Schools During Wildfires](#) for schools when there is wildfire smoke. This information is available on our website, so please share this information as appropriate. This guide is based upon the California Department of Education's (CDE's) air quality guidance template for schools, which provides recommendations for schools and others responsible for children during a wildfire smoke and other air quality event(s). The guidance provides health recommendations for schools, coaches, and event coordinators regarding student exposure to wildfire smoke.

For more information, call the NCUAQMD at (707) 443-3093, the Humboldt County Public Health Department at (707) 445-6200, the Trinity County Public Health Department at (530) 623-1265, or the Del Norte Public Health Department at (707) 464-3191.

## Health Information & Actions To Protect Yourself From Smoke Impacts

Concentrations of smoke may vary depending upon location, weather, and distance from the fire. Smoke from wildfires and structure fires contain harmful chemicals that can affect your health. Smoke can cause eye and throat irritation, coughing, and difficulty breathing. People who are at greatest risk of experiencing symptoms due to smoke include: those with respiratory disease (such as asthma), those with heart disease, young children, and older adults.

These sensitive populations should stay indoors and avoid prolonged activity. All others should limit prolonged or heavy activity and time spent outdoors. Even healthy adults can be affected by smoke. Seek medical help if you have symptoms that worsen or become severe.

Follow these general precautions to protect your health during a smoke event:

- Minimize or stop outdoor activities, especially exercise.
- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed as much as possible.
- Do not run fans that bring smoky outdoor air inside – examples include swamp coolers, whole-house fans, and fresh air ventilation systems.
- Run your air-conditioner only if it does not bring smoke in from the outdoors. Change the standard air conditioner filter to a medium or high efficiency filter. If available, use the “re-circulate” or “recycle” setting on the unit.
- Do not smoke, fry food, or do other things that will create indoor air pollution.

Consider leaving the area until smoke conditions improve if you have repeated coughing, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, nausea, unusual fatigue, lightheadedness.

For further information, visit the District’s website at [www.ncuaqmd.org](http://www.ncuaqmd.org) or call the District’s Wildfire Response Coordinator at (707) 443-3093 x122.

U.S. EPA AIR QUALITY INDEX ( <a href="https://www.airnow.gov/aqi/aqi-basics/">https://www.airnow.gov/aqi/aqi-basics/</a> )			
Action	Level of Concern	AQI Value	Actions to Protect Yourself
	<b>Good</b>	<b>0 - 50</b>	<b>None, air quality is satisfactory and poses little or no risk</b>
	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>51 - 100</b>	<b>Sensitive individuals should limit prolonged or heavy exertion</b>
	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (USG)	101 - 150	People within USG should <b>reduce</b> prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion
Advisory	Unhealthy (UH)	151 - 200	People within USG should <b>avoid all</b> prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion
	Very Unhealthy (VUH)	201 - 300	Everyone should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion
Alert	Hazardous (HAZ)	> 301	Everyone should avoid any outdoor activity