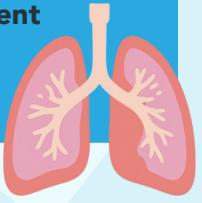


# AIR QUALITY DURING WILDFIRES

## Be Ready For Wildfire Smoke

**Everyone should reduce exposure to wildfire smoke.** Smoke is a mixture of gases and fine particles produced when wood and other organic materials burn, with the greatest health risk coming from fine particles that can enter the eyes and lungs. These particles can cause symptoms such as burning eyes, a runny nose, and bronchitis, and can worsen chronic heart and lung disease. While most healthy people experience mild, short-term effects, higher-risk groups include **children, older adults, people with heart or lung disease, and those with frequent smoke exposure.** Wildfire smoke has also been linked to premature death, making precautions important for everyone when wildfires are present.



## PLAN AHEAD AND KNOW YOUR RISK

Visibility Range	Particulate Levels (est. for 1-hr avg $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )	Level of Health Concern
> 10 miles	0 to 40	Good
6 - 9 miles	41 to 80	Moderate
3 - 5 miles	81 to 175	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
1.5 - 2.5 miles	176 to 300	Unhealthy
.75 to 1.5 miles	301 to 500	Very Unhealthy
< .75 miles	> 500	Hazardous

1. Face away from the sun.
2. Look at objects/landmarks that are at known distances.
3. Estimate the distance at which the known objects disappear.

### LEVELS OF HEALTH CONCERN

**GOOD:** Particulates pose little or no risk.

**MODERATE:** Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.

**UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS:** People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. The general public is not likely to be affected.

**UNHEALTHY:** People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.

**VERY UNHEALTHY:** People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.

**HAZARDOUS:** Everyone should avoid all outdoor physical activity; people with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should remain indoors and keep activity levels low.

### CREATE A CLEAN AIR ROOM

- Keep it cool by using air conditioners, heat pumps, fans, and window shades.
- Use a portable air cleaner in one or more rooms. They work best when run continuously with doors and windows closed.
- If you have central air, run your HVAC system. Use high-efficiency filters (rated MERV-13 or higher) and replace them often.
- Avoid activities that create air pollution, such as frying foods, sweeping, vacuuming, and using gas, propane, or wood-burning stoves and furnaces.



# REDUCE EXPOSURE OUTDOORS

**Take it easier when smoke is in the air to reduce how much smoke you inhale.** Limit your outdoor exercise when it is smoky, or choose lower-intensity activities to reduce your smoke exposure. When indoors, take steps to keep your indoor air cool and clean.

## CHECK YOUR AIR QUALITY.

Check your air quality. Smoke levels can change a lot during the day, so wait until the air quality is better before you are active outdoors.



## CHOOSE A MASK THAT WILL HELP PROTECT YOU FROM SMOKE.

It is important to know that cloth masks will not protect you from wildfire smoke. N95 respirator masks can provide protection from wildfire smoke.



## RESCHEDULE OUTDOOR WORK TASKS.

If outdoor tasks and activities cannot be rescheduled and must be conducted when air quality is poor, it is recommended that individuals reduce smoke inhalation by:



- Limiting the time spent outdoors by only performing essential activities.
- Taking frequent breaks indoors in places where the air is clean, especially during periods with high outdoor levels of wildfire smoke.
- If you must work outdoors, wear an N95 respirator mask.

# KNOW WHERE TO GET INFORMATION

During wildland fires, your air quality can change quickly. Being prepared means being aware of wildland fires and knowing where to find information on air quality:

## CURRENT WILDFIRE INFORMATION:

[akfireinfo.com](http://akfireinfo.com) (State of Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection)  
<https://fire.ak.blm.gov/> (Alaska Interagency Coordination Center)



## AIR QUALITY MONITORING INFORMATION:

AK DEC AQ: <http://dec.alaska.gov/Applications/Air/airtoolsweb/Aq/>  
UAF: <https://smoke.alaska.edu/PM25.html>

# KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU MUST EVACUATE

**Stay tuned to local news media in case you are asked to evacuate.** If your indoor air gets too hot, seek relief at a clean air shelter, another large building with air conditioning and good filtration, or with friends or family.



Pets and livestock can be affected by wildfire smoke, too. Watch pets and livestock closely for symptoms and take steps to reduce their exposure.