



Air Quality Health Advisory **For Thursday August 31 to Tuesday September 5, 2017**

The Public Health Officers for Yuba and Sutter counties and the Feather River Air Quality Management District are issuing a joint air quality health advisory to notify the public of potentially poor air quality conditions through Tuesday September 5th caused from smoke from several wildfires burning in Northern California, including the Ponderosa Fire in Butte County.

The current Air Quality Index levels are in the moderate to unhealthy range in the Sacramento Valley. The northerly winds are predicted to bring additional smoke into the area.



“Residents with lung or heart disease, and the elderly are advised to leave areas where levels of particulate matter are high. For everyone else, when you smell smoke, or see smoke around you, you should consider staying indoors and avoiding heavy exertion,” cautions Lou Anne Cummings, MD, MPH, the Sutter County Health Officer.

Smoke density can vary widely from one local area to another and also with time of day. “Air quality conditions depend on a number of factors, which include proximity to the fire, wind speed and direction, and whether inversions are present,” warns Christopher D. Brown, Air Pollution Control officer. Based on information available at this time, the FRAQMD expects conditions to last until Tuesday September 5th.

You can check current conditions online at www.airnow.gov. Residents can also sign up for air quality forecasts and alerts at www.fraqmd.org. Residents who see or smell smoke should consider these precautionary measures:

- Healthy people should delay strenuous exercise, particularly when they can smell smoke.

- Children and elderly people should consider avoiding outdoor activities, particularly prolonged outdoor exertion. Parents of children involved in youth sports programs should consider whether their children be allowed to participate when smoke is in the air.
- People with health-related illnesses, particularly respiratory problems, should remain indoors.
- Keep windows and doors closed as much as possible. Use the recycle or recirculate mode on the air conditioner in your home or car.
- Avoid the use of non-HEPA paper face mask filters which are not capable of filtering extra fine particles. Do not rely on HEPA face mask filters to do unnecessary outdoor activities.
- Keep airways moist by drinking lots of water. Breathing through a warm, wet washcloth can also help relieve dryness, but does not filter out the hazardous smoke particles.
- Avoid the fire areas.

Wildfire smoke may contain particulate matter, ozone, carbon monoxide, and toxic air contaminants. While all persons may experience varying degrees of symptoms, more sensitive individuals, such as the young, aged and those with respiratory conditions are at greatest risk of experiencing more aggravated symptoms. Symptoms may include, but are not limited to, coughing, watery and itchy eyes, and difficulty breathing. Persons experiencing questionable or severe symptoms should seek professional medical advice and treatment. “Contact your doctor if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue,” said Dr. Cummings.

The following index may also assist in assessing the air quality based on the visibility in your area. To assess visibility:

- Face away from the sun. Determine visibility range by looking for targets that are at known distances (miles).
- The visible range is the point where even high-contrast objects disappear.
- After determining visibility in miles use the following Wildfire Smoke Visibility Index to assess air quality.

| Visibility Range | Health Category | Recommended Action |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 10 + miles | Good | None |
| 5 – 10 miles | Moderate | Usually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion |
| 3 – 5 miles | Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups | Sensitive people should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. |
| 1.5 – 2.5 miles | Unhealthy | Sensitive people should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. |
| 1 – 1.25 miles | Very Unhealthy | Sensitive people should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. |
| <0.75 miles | Hazardous | Sensitive people should remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Everyone else should avoid all physical activity outdoors. |

For distances, you can try your electronic device map app or look at a map of the local area that has a mile scale. Some examples of local distances: From the junction of Hwy 99 and Hwy 20 to the Sutter Buttes is 13 miles; the distance between the 5th Street and 10th Street bridges is about 0.5 mile.

County officials will continue to monitor air quality in Sutter and Yuba County and provide updates on this advisory as needed. For current information, or to sign up for air quality alerts and forecasts, go to the Feather River Air Quality Management District at <http://www.fraqmd.org/> or check the Sutter County and Sutter County Public Health Facebook pages or Yuba County website.

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