



Air Quality Health Advisory EFFECTIVE AUGUST 20 – AUGUST 23, 2020

The Public Health Departments 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 poor air quality conditions from wildfire smoke. The smoke impacting the area is from the August Complex, the LNU Lightning Complex, and other regional wildfires.

The current Air Quality Index levels are in the Unhealthy to Very Unhealthy range. Smoke from the fires may continue to cause unhealthy air quality in Yuba and Sutter counties through Sunday, August 23.



The Sutter and Yuba Public Health Departments advise residents with lung or heart disease, and the elderly 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.

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.

You can check current conditions online at www.airnow.gov or www.sparetheair.com. Residents can also sign up for air quality forecasts and alerts at www.fraqmd.org that can be sent by email or text message. Residents that do not have internet access may also check particulate matter levels by listening to reports from local radio stations, local news, checking the local newspaper such as the Appeal-Democrat (during extended wildfire smoke impacts), or by using the distance/visibility table at the bottom of this advisory.

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.
- Masks, such as cloth masks worn to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, are not capable of filtering extra fine particles found in wildfire smoke.
- Do not rely on HEPA (N-95) respirators 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 and watch for emergency equipment.

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.

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). You can use an electronic device map app or a map of the local area that has a mile scale.
- The visible range is the point where even high-contrast objects disappear.

Distance you can see	Recommended action if you are a healthy adult, teenager, or other child	Recommended action if you are age 65 and over, pregnant, a young child or have asthma, respiratory illness, or lung or heart disease
10 + miles	Watch for changing conditions and moderate outdoor activity based on personal sensitivity	
5 – 10 miles	Moderate outdoor activity	Minimize or avoid outdoor activity
Less than 5 miles	Minimize or avoid outdoor activity	Stay inside or in a location with good air quality

Some examples of local distances: From the junction of Hwy 99 and Hwy 20 to the South Butte in the Sutter Buttes is about 11 miles; from the 10th Street bridge to Township Road is about 5 miles; from the intersection of Hwy 20 and Acacia Avenue to the South Butte is about 5.5 miles; and 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 website <http://www.fraqmd.org/> or check the Sutter County and Sutter County Public Health Facebook pages or Yuba County website.