



News Release

Headline: SWCAA issues air pollution advisory for wildfire smoke for all of Southwest Washington including Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties

Release Date: Sunday, Aug. 19, 2018

Increasing levels of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) in Southwest Washington due to intrusions of wildfire smoke throughout Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties today have triggered Southwest Clean Air Agency to issue an air pollution advisory. Pollution levels are expected to worsen overnight and in the early morning. Not all areas will be impacted the same as conditions are expected to oscillate with changing weather patterns. Conditions are expected to continue at least until Wednesday. Higher elevation smoke is expected to linger throughout the rest of the week as an upper level low pressure system will bring smoke into the area from fires in British Columbia. Smoke intrusion through the Columbia River Gorge from accumulated smoke in the Columbia Basin is also expected. The Southwest Clean Air Agency will continue to monitor conditions and update this advisory as necessary.

Current air quality information is available on the web:

<http://www.swcleanair.org/burning/airquality.asp>

The Air Quality Index rates air quality based on labels of “good” (0 to 50, green), “moderate” (51 to 100, yellow), “unhealthy for sensitive groups” (101-150, orange), and “unhealthy” (151-200, red), and “very unhealthy” (201 to 300, deep red). Any reading above 300 is “hazardous.” Smoke levels (PM_{2.5}) levels are expected to reach into the “unhealthy” range throughout Southwest Washington.

While residents can view current air quality conditions at <http://www.swcleanair.org>, SWCAA’s monitoring network does not capture air quality conditions in all communities. For this reason, it’s important for residents to gauge air quality conditions where they live and take appropriate actions to protect themselves. Remember, local smoke levels can rise and fall rapidly, depending on weather factors including wind direction.

Wildfire smoke can cause a range of health problems:

- Chest pain
- Fast heartbeat
- Coughing

- Stinging eyes
- Asthma attack
- Trouble breathing
- Irritated sinuses
- Headaches

Sensitive groups should take precautions, including: children, older adults, and people that are pregnant, have heart or lung issues (such as asthma and COPD), or that have had a stroke.

- Stay indoors when possible.
- Limit your physical activity outdoors, such as running, bicycling, physical labor, and sports.
- Close windows in your home, if possible, and keep the indoor air clean. If you have an air conditioner, use the "recirculation" switch. Use an indoor air filter if available.
- If you do not have an air conditioner, consider finding a public place with clean, air-conditioned indoor air like a public library or a community center.
- Avoid driving, when possible. If you must drive, keep the windows closed. If you use the car's fan or air conditioning, make sure the system recirculates air from inside the car; don't pull air from outside.
- Schools and daycare providers should consider postponing outdoor activities or moving them indoors.
- N95 or N100 rated masks can help protect some people from air pollution. These masks are usually available at hardware and home repair stores. Please check with your doctor to see if this appropriate for you.

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/334-353.pdf>.

- For more information on ways to reduce your exposure, see the Washington Department of Health's

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/SmokeFromFires>

As always, consult with your health care provider for more specific questions and concerns.

Visit the Washington Smoke-Blog for more detailed information: <http://wasmoke.blogspot.com/>

For weather information visit the National Weather Service website at: www.nws.noaa.gov

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