



News Release

Headline: SWCAA expands air quality advisory for wildfire smoke to Clark and Cowlitz Counties

Release Date: Thursday, August 31, 2023

The Southwest Clean Air Agency is issuing an air quality advisory for Clark and Cowlitz Counties today through Friday afternoon due to increasing fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) levels from wildfire smoke. Smoke from wildfires may be intermittent and reach unhealthy levels.

Current air quality information is available on the web:

<https://www.swcleanair.gov/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.gov>, 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.

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 is appropriate for you.
- 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, check with your health care provider for more specific questions and concerns.

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

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

Contacts:

Uri Papish, SW Clean Air Agency, Vancouver, WA, 360-574-3058 ext 112, uri@swcleanair.gov