



# WILDFIRE SMOKE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

A joint message from the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD) and partners

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## 2019 Wildfire Information for Schools

The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD), the Humboldt, Trinity and Del Norte County Departments of Health and Human Services Public Health Branches, and regional Tribal health departments, would like to help you prepare in the event of a wildfire. If a wildfire breaks out in your area, please be aware of the following information.

**Air Quality Alerts and Advisories** are issued by the NCUAQMD, in conjunction with the Humboldt, Trinity and Del Norte County Departments of Health and Human Services Public Health Branches, when the air in an area becomes “Unhealthy” or “Hazardous”. If your school is located within a region impacted by wildfire smoke, please watch for Air Quality Alerts and Advisories which can be heard by calling 1-866-BURN-DAY (1-866-287-6329) and [www.ncuaqmd.org](http://www.ncuaqmd.org).

In preparation for Wildfire Season, the NCUAQMD is providing schools with the following informative documents: *Recommendations for Schools and Others Responsible for Children during a Wildfire*, *PEHSU Information on Health Risks of Wildfire for Children – Acute Phase*, and *Protecting your family from Wildfire Smoke*. Please forward this information to appropriate school staff for use during a Wildfire Smoke Event.

The NCUAQMD has a **School Notification list** for email distribution of Air Quality Alert notifications. To add appropriate school staff to the School Notification List, contact the NCUAQMD at (707) 443-3093. There is an additional list being compiled for schools holding summer school sessions on their campus. If your school will be holding summer session, please call or email the NCUAQMD with the name of a contact person for that program.

**Children are more sensitive to smoke** because their lungs are still developing. Children tend to spend more time outside, they engage in more vigorous activity, and they inhale more air (and therefore more particles) per pound of body weight.

People who are at greatest risk of experiencing symptoms due to smoke include young children, pregnant women, older adults, and those with respiratory disease such as asthma and/or heart disease. If you or members of your family have lung or heart disease, contact your doctor immediately if you have symptoms that get worse. Even healthy adults can be affected by smoke.

For more information, call the NCUAQMD at (707) 443-3093, the Humboldt County Public Health Department at (707) 445-6200, the Trinity County Public Health Department at (530) 623-1265, or the Del Norte Public Health Department at (707) 464-3191.

## Health Information for Smoke Impacts

Concentrations of smoke may vary depending upon location, weather, and distance from the fire. Smoke from wildfires and structure fires contain harmful chemicals that can affect your health. Smoke can cause eye and throat irritation, coughing, and difficulty breathing. People who are at greatest risk of experiencing symptoms due to smoke include: those with respiratory disease (such as asthma), those with heart disease, young children, and older adults.

These sensitive populations should stay indoors and avoid prolonged activity. All others should limit prolonged or heavy activity and time spent outdoors. Even healthy adults can be affected by smoke. Seek medical help if you have symptoms that worsen or become severe.

If you can see, taste, or feel smoke, contact your local health department and/or primary healthcare provider. This is especially important if you have health concerns, are elderly, are pregnant, or have a child in your care.

Follow these general precautions to protect your health during a smoke event:

- Minimize or stop outdoor activities, especially exercise
- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed as much as possible
- Do not run fans that bring smoky outdoor air inside – examples include swamp coolers, whole-house fans, and fresh air ventilation systems
- Run your air-conditioner only if it does not bring smoke in from the outdoors. Change the standard air conditioner filter to a medium or high efficiency filter. If available, use the “re-circulate” or “recycle” setting on the unit
- Do not smoke, fry food, or do other things that will create indoor air pollution

If you have lung disease (including asthma) or heart disease, closely monitor your health and contact your doctor if you have symptoms that worsen.

Consider leaving the area until smoke conditions improve if you have repeated coughing, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, nausea, unusual fatigue, lightheadedness.

**For 24-hour Air Quality Advisory Information, call toll-free at  
1-866-BURN-DAY (1-866-287-6329).**

**For further information, visit the District’s website at  
[www.ncuaqmd.org](http://www.ncuaqmd.org)**

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