



SISKIYOU COUNTY

Health and Human Services Agency

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FOR RELEASE: Immediate

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HEALTH ALERT

The Siskiyou County Health Officer, Dr. Stephen Kolpacoff is advising residents to take precautions and avoid voluntary outdoor activities when the smoke level is unhealthy. Schools, recreation districts and other organizations that operate outdoor sports programs are being advised to voluntarily cancel or postpone outdoor activities when air quality is unhealthy. Smoky conditions can quickly change throughout the day. It's very important for isolated residents to have neighbors or family check on them to make sure they are protecting themselves from increased smoke exposure. The following recommendations can protect residents during smoke exposure.

If you are in an area with heavy, visible smoke, Public Health advises the following recommendations:

- Stay informed by checking the Air Quality Index linked to our web site at www.co.siskiyou.ca.us or stay tuned to the radio. If you have questions, call the Nurse of the Day (M-F 8-5:00) at 841-2134.
- Stay indoors as much as possible. Keep windows and doors closed. Run air conditioner if you have one, with fresh-air intake closed. If your air conditioner unit can accommodate a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter it will reduce particulates. Changing your air conditioner filter and using a room air cleaner which utilizes a HEPA filter can help reduce fine particles in indoor air.
- No strenuous physical activities outdoors. We recommend that active children play indoors.
- Avoid using swamp coolers or whole house fans in smoky conditions. Seek relocation site if you do not have air conditioning.
- Do not add to indoor pollution. Do not use anything that burns such as candles, fireplaces, or gas stoves. Do not fry foods. Do not vacuum because it stirs up particles already inside your home. Do not smoke as it also adds pollution into the air.

If you do not have air conditioning, take these additional steps to protect yourself and your family from heat exhaustion, which can be especially dangerous for infants, children, the elderly and people with chronic disease.

- Lower body temperature by using cold compresses, misting, and taking cool showers, baths or sponge baths. Wear light weight and light colored clothing.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. However, if your doctor has told you to limit the amount you drink or you are taking water pills, ask your doctor how much you should drink during the heat.
- Avoid drinks with alcohol or large amounts of sugar, as these can promote dehydration.
- A mask is not recommended in moderate smoke. It can make the lungs work harder to breathe and does not protect against irritating gases in the smoke.
- Disposable Particulate Respirators (N-95 masks, NIOSH approved) can be of some benefit at reducing exposure to smoke if they are properly fitted and sealed closely to the wearer's face.

***For questions: Please call Public Health at 841-2134.