

Wildfire Smoke: Protecting Children in Schools, in Childcare and at Home

As wildfires rage across our region, it's important to keep health considerations in mind. Breathing smoke can pose health risks. This edition of Healthy School News offers you tips and resources for protecting children and staff in schools, in childcare facilities, and at home.

In this Issue:

Apps Assist with Critical Decisions
Wildfire Smoke: Bad for Our Health
State Wildfire Links: Check your State for Current Information, Guidance
Air Quality Flag!
Your EPA Healthy Schools Team

Apps Assist with Critical Decisions

Prepare your staff now with the following apps. Understanding the air quality standards can help your staff make the critical decisions on indoor and outside activities.

EPA's "Smoke Sense" App for Androids

Get current and location-specific information about smoke, learn about health impacts, and participate in a citizen science project. www.epa.gov/air-research/smoke-sense

EPA's "AirNow" App for Androids and Apple Devices

Get current and location-specific information about air pollution (PM 2.5 and ozone). <https://developer.epa.gov/airnow/>

Wildfire Smoke: Bad for Our Health

Children are considered a sensitive population group. Exposure to wildfire smoke can cause health problems. Symptoms include:

- burning eyes
- sore throat
- headache
- coughing
- wheezing
- shortness of breath
- worsening of heart and lung conditions

The possibility for high levels of smoke to worsen symptoms or trigger health effects for people with certain conditions is especially a concern, because this can be life-threatening. Sensitive groups include:

- infants and children
- people with heart and lung disease
- people with respiratory infections
- people with diabetes
- pregnant women
- people over 65

For more about the health effects from breathing smoke: <https://cfpub.epa.gov/airnow/index.cfm?action=smoke.index>

Back to School



State Wildfire Links: Check your State for Current Information, Guidance

The following links and fact sheets can provide detail on managing a wildfire smoke event affecting your community, school, or childcare.

Alaska:

<http://dec.alaska.gov/Applications/Air/airtoolsweb/Advisories>

Idaho:

Recommendations for Schools and Others Responsible for Children during Wildfire Smoke Event

<http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Health/EnvironmentalHealth/Wildfire-table-for-schools%20mkredits.pdf>

Oregon:

Public Health Guidance for School Outdoor Activities During Wildfire Events

<https://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Served/1e8815h.pdf>

<http://oregonsmoke.blogspot.com/>

Washington:

<http://wasmoke.blogspot.com/>

Recommendations for recess, P.E., and athletic events and practices at schools during smoky conditions:

[Air Pollution and School Activities Guide \(PDF\)](#).

Recommendations for schools and buildings with mechanical ventilation:

[Improving Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality During Wildfire Smoke Events \(PDF\)](#)



Air Quality Flag!

Consider supporting student health and your community by adding the School Air Quality Flag Program to your school. Your PTA is an excellent partner. https://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=flag_program.index

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Admin Note: We are updating our mailing systems. Your next issue of Healthy School News will come to you through an email "list-serv." The email may look a little different. Be on the lookout!

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