

HEALTH ADVISORY



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Smoke Advisory

Unhealthy Air Quality Declared due to Multiple Wildfires

According to the South Coast Air Quality Management District, potential direct smoke impact from multiple wildfires burning has caused unhealthy [air quality in Los Angeles County](#). Smoke from the Sandy Fire is expected to impact much of western Los Angeles County including Calabasas, Santa Monica, and Los Angeles City. Smoke from the Santa Rosa Island fire that is already over the ocean is expected to come onshore overnight impacting the entire coastline of Los Angeles. **This advisory remains in effect through Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.** Smoke impacts will depend on fire activity, containment efforts, and the weather. For more information, visit [CALFIRE](#).

Wildfire smoke is a mixture of small particles, gases and water vapor. The primary health concern is the small particles, which can cause burning eyes, runny nose, scratchy throat, headaches and illness (i.e., bronchitis). People at higher risk, children, the elderly, those with respiratory or heart conditions, and people with compromised immune systems, may experience more severe effects such as difficulty breathing, wheezing, coughing, fatigue, and/or chest pain.

"Predicting where ash or soot from a fire will travel, or how winds will impact air quality, is difficult, so it's important for everyone to stay aware of the air quality in your area, make plans, and take action to protect your health and your family's health," said Muntu Davis, MD, MPH, Health Officer for Los Angeles County.

"Smoke and ash can harm everyone, even those who are healthy. However,

people at higher risk include children, older adults, pregnant individuals, and those with heart or lung conditions or weakened immune systems.”

Public Health urges everyone in areas where there is visible smoke or the smell of smoke or unhealthy air quality to avoid unnecessary outdoor exposure and to limit physical exertion (whether indoor or outdoor), such as exercise. Children, older adults, and people who are pregnant or have other air quality sensitive conditions, such as heart disease, asthma, and other chronic respiratory diseases, should follow these recommendations and stay indoors as much as possible even in areas where smoke, soot, or ash cannot be seen or there is no smell of smoke. If your condition worsens, contact your health care provider immediately for medical advice.

“We are also advising schools and recreational programs that are in session in smoke-impacted areas to review and follow the California Department of Education’s [Memo: Get Smart about Wildfire Smoke - Clear Guidelines for Schools and Wildfire Smoke](#) or the California Environmental Protection Agency’s [Guidance for Schools During Wildfire Smoke Events](#), based on the air quality level in their area. This may include limiting or suspending outside physical activities, including physical education and after-school sports, until conditions improve. Non-school related sports organizations for children and adults are advised to follow the same guidance and to cancel outdoor practices and competitions in areas where there is visible smoke, soot, or ash, or where there is a smell of smoke. The same guidance applies to other outdoor activities, like hiking or picnicking, in affected areas,” said Dr. Davis.

People can participate in indoor sports or other strenuous activity in areas with visible smoke, soot, or ash, provided the indoor location has air conditioning that does not draw air from the outside and it has closed windows and doors to protect the cleanliness of indoor air. If not, it is recommended that everyone follow the guidelines as if they were outside.

The following recommendations will help you protect yourself and your family from harmful effects of bad air quality:

- If you see or smell smoke, or notice particles and ash in the air, stay indoors to limit exposure, especially if you have heart or lung conditions, are elderly, or have children.
- Keep indoor air clean by closing windows and doors. Use air conditioners that recirculate air to filter out harmful particles.
- Wear an N95 or P100 mask if you must go outside in smoky conditions for long periods of time in areas with heavy smoke or where ash is present.
- Avoid air conditioners that only bring in outside air and don't recirculate. Check and replace air filters regularly. Filters labeled "MERV13" or higher are most effective for removing smoke particles. HEPA air purifiers can further reduce indoor particles.
- If it's too hot to keep windows and doors closed and you don't have an air conditioner, go to a public place like a library or shopping center to stay cool and protect yourself from harmful air.
- Avoid using fireplaces, candles, or vacuums. Clean dusty surfaces with a damp cloth and don't smoke.
- If you experience symptoms like severe coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing, chest pain, palpitations, nausea, or unusual fatigue, contact your doctor or go to urgent care. For life-threatening symptoms, call 911.
- When smoke lingers, fine particles may build up indoors even if you can't see them. Masks can protect against larger particles, but most don't block fine particles or toxic gases, which are more harmful.
- Practice safe clean-up following a fire. Follow the ash clean-up and food safety instructions at <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/wildfire/>.

The following is recommended for pets:

- Avoid leaving your pets outdoors, particularly at night. Pets should be brought into an indoor location, such as an enclosed garage or a house.

- If dogs or cats appear to be in respiratory distress, they should be taken to an animal hospital immediately. Symptoms of respiratory distress for dogs include panting and/or an inability to catch their breath. Symptoms for cats are less noticeable, but may include panting and/or an inability to catch their breath.

To stay updated with real-time/forecasted Air Quality in your area, download the South Coast AQMD Mobile App: <http://www.aqmd.gov/mobileapp> (Also available in Spanish!) or visit <https://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/air-quality-forecasts>.



Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of over 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the LA County Department of Public Health is comprised of nearly 4,100 employees and has an annual budget of \$1 billion.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health works to protect health, prevent disease, and promote health and well-being.