



Guidance During Wildfire Smoke Events

Source: California Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and Cal OSHA

Wildfires in California can create smoke conditions that lead to unhealthy or hazardous air quality for extended periods. This factsheet provides guidance for college and district officials regarding the closure of facilities and managing poor air-quality due to a prolonged wildfire smoke event.

In order to maintain a safe learning, teaching and working environment in the Yuba Community College District, all district personnel will be made aware of the following guidance on Wildfire Smoke and Air Quality enumerated below.

Air Quality Monitoring:

- There are a number of online sources that measure the Air Quality Index (AQI), these sites vary in the time duration of the measurement, location, and quality of measurement equipment, which may or may not be appropriate for changing conditions and the multiple locations served by the District during an air quality event.
- CAL/OSHA and US EPA recommend using the current AQI posted on the Environmental Protection Agency's Air Now website as the official source for outdoor AQI information.
- As soon as a wildfire has the potential to effect District locations, local monitoring of AQI should begin. This should include monitoring official AQI websites and, if available, local sensors to determine real time trends and changes in local air quality conditions.

Reducing Outdoor Activities:

- To better protect individuals from the impacts of wildfire smoke exposure, all locations shall be prepared to comply with wildfire smoke regulations (CAL/OSHA Section 5141.1) including but not limited to
 - Reduce exposure and harm by following Matrix on Page 2.
 - Distribution of N95 respirator to outdoor workers for use when the AQI is 150 or higher, mandatory use is required when the AQI is 500. The district will provide N95 masks to employees expected to work outdoors over 15 minutes at any one time, or over 1 hour cumulative during their work shift.

Improving Indoor Air Quality:

- The common advisory for wildfire smoke exposure is to stay indoors.
- Exterior doors should not be propped "open" and large shop doors should remain closed during a wildfire event that is creating poor outside air quality.
- Interior spaces may have smoke smell at times when outside air quality is very unhealthy. The use of N95 masks is recommended during these times for those that are sensitive to these conditions.

- HVAC air filters should be checked periodically to ensure proper system operation and schedule more frequent filter replacements.
- Fire alarm systems, HVAC systems, and smoke detectors should be scheduled for cleaning and/or replacement in some cases after each wildfire season. This will reduce the risk of nuisance smoke detector alarms that result in HVAC systems being shut down.
- Building interior spaces should be "flushed out" with fresh outside air after a wildfire event has ended and/or after an extended period of poor air quality.

AQI Based Decision Making Matrix:

- The decision to implement measures should be made at the local level with communication and coordination with District and sister college administration. The local level decision is based on the local county and/or the college administration. The actions should be aligned with proven AQI-based health risks and impacts, in order to protect the college community.
- Employees who fall into sensitive groups should follow the district’s accommodation process.
- The matrix is intended for use in wildfire smoke conditions, which result in worsening and unhealthy air quality, it does not apply to direct threat of fire hazard.
- Actions for athletic events should follow the guidelines of the California Community College Athletic Association.
- Outside groups renting District or College facilities should follow the guidelines established by the District and implemented by the College at the time of the event.

The District standardizes on use of the US EPA Air Now Website as the official source of AQI information:

<p>AQI above 100 Air quality is “unhealthy for sensitive groups”. Excuse students and employees with sensitivity to air pollution (e.g., asthma) from outdoor activities and physical education activities.</p>
<p>AQI above 150 Air quality is “unhealthy for public & more serious health effects to sensitive groups”. Exercise indoors or limit vigorous outdoor activities to a maximum of 15 minutes.</p>
<p>AQI above 200 Air quality is “very unhealthy – Risk of health effects is increased for everyone”. Move all activities indoors or re-schedule outdoor events. If appropriate, move operations remotely and/or close the campus (if current or forecasted air quality is expected to be above 200)</p>
<p>AQI above 300 Air quality is "hazardous". Emergency conditions: everyone is likely to be affected. If appropriate, move operations remotely and/or close the campus (if current or forecasted air quality is expected to be above 300)</p>