



**NEW MEXICO
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**



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Immediate Release

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Environment and Health Departments Issue Smoke Advisory

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) today issued a health advisory for the south-central mountain areas of New Mexico affected by smoke from the White fire near Ruidoso Downs.

The Department of Health recommends that sensitive groups such as the elderly, small children, or any individuals with respiratory or heart problems, leave the area where the smoke levels are within the unhealthy range (see table below) until the smoke dissipates or stay inside as much as possible. Citizens are also urged not to use swamp coolers as they will pull the smoke inside.

Air quality conditions associated with smoke are especially important for people with underlying health conditions such as asthma, emphysema, and cardiovascular disease. If symptoms associated with these pre-existing conditions do not respond to your usual recommended medications, see a health care provider immediately.

Visibility can serve as a good surrogate in determining air quality. The following chart includes guidelines for extrapolating air quality from observed visibility.

Categories	Visibility in Miles
Good	10 miles and up
Moderate	6 to 9
Unhealthy for Sensitive People	3 to 5
Unhealthy	1½ to 2½
Very Unhealthy	1 to 1¼
Hazardous	¾ mile or less

Procedure for Making Personal Observation to Determine Smoke Concentrations

- Face away from the sun.
- Determine the limit of your visibility range by looking for targets at known distances (miles). Visible range is that point at which even the high contrast objects totally disappear.
- After determining visibility in miles, use the chart to determine appropriate cautionary statement.

For further information on the impacts of smoke to health, go to NMED's Web page:

<http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/Wildfire-PM.html> or NMDOH's Environmental Health Epidemiology Bureau Web page: <http://nmhealth.org/eheb/index.shtml> or contact Jill Turner, NMED Communications Coordinator at (505) 222-9548 or Olivia Lara, NMDOH Communications Director at (505) 827-2619 or (505) 470-2290.

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