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NEWS 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 smoke advisory for areas of New Mexico affected by smoke from the Tres Lagunas wildfire near Pecos, New Mexico. Currently, smoke levels are expected to be worst in Pecos Canyon, but communities south and east of the fire, including the town of Pecos, will also be affected by smoke especially during the evening and into the morning hours. Over the weekend, smoke may also impact the cities of Las Vegas, Santa Fe and, potentially, Albuquerque.

The New Mexico Environment Department and the U.S. Forest Service operate air quality monitoring equipment at multiple locations around the state. The monitors gather information about air quality conditions and help to keep the public informed. Data from the Environment Department and Forest Service air monitors can be found at <http://air.nmenv.state.nm.us> and <https://www.airsis.com/usfs/>.

In areas without air quality monitoring equipment, visibility can serve as a good substitute in determining air quality. People should use the following guide to determine air quality from visibility: **if visibility is 10 miles and up, the air quality is good; six to nine miles, air quality is moderate; three to five miles, air quality is unhealthy for sensitive people; one and a half to two and a half miles, air quality is unhealthy; one to one and a quarter miles, air quality is very unhealthy; and three quarters of a mile or less, air quality is hazardous.**

The procedure for making personal observation to determine smoke concentrations is as follows:

- Face away from the sun.
- Determine the limit of your visibility range by looking for targets at known distances. Visible range is that point at which even the high contrast objects totally disappear.

When the category of visibility is ‘Unhealthy for Sensitive People’ or worse, take these steps:

1. If you are sensitive to smoke, evacuate the area if you can. If you choose to stay, remain indoors with the doors and windows closed.
2. If available, use a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter on your air conditioner to reduce the amount of smoke pulled into your home from the outdoors. A HEPA filter may reduce the number of irritating fine particles in indoor air. Do not use swamp coolers when there are high levels of smoke outdoors because most coolers of this type will pull the smoke indoors.
3. During high temperatures, older individuals or those in frail health who do not have an air conditioner are advised to stay with family members or friends who do.
4. Reduce other sources of indoor air pollution such as smoking cigarettes or burning incense.
5. Recognize the symptoms of smoke exposure and pay attention to visibility.
6. For severe shortness of breath, chest pain, decreased mental function or other life threatening conditions, call 911 immediately.
7. Listen for news updates on the fire and smoke in your area. Continue to follow all precautions and instructions given by fire management authorities.

For further information on the impacts of smoke to health, go to the Department of Health’s Web page: <https://nmtracking.org/fire> or contact Jim Winchester, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 231-8800 or Kenny Vigil, NMDOH Communications Director at (505) 470-2290.

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