



NEW MEXICO  
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT



*Office of the Secretary*

BILL RICHARDSON  
Governor  
DIANE DENISH  
Lieutenant Governor

Harold Runnels Building  
1190 Saint Francis Drive (87505)  
PO Box 5469, Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469  
Phone (505) 827-2855 Fax (505) 827-2836  
www.nmenv.state.nm.us

RON CURRY  
Secretary  
SARAH COTTRELL  
Deputy Secretary

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Contact: Marissa Bardino, NMED Communications Director  
Phone: (505) 827-0314

Contact: Deborah Busemeyer, DOH Communications Director  
Phone: (505) 827-2619

**Environment, Health Departments Issue Statewide Smoke Advisory**

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department and the New Mexico Department of Health today issued a smoke advisory for the areas of New Mexico affected by smoke from the numerous wildfires currently burning across the state.

The Department of Health recommends that sensitive groups, such as the elderly, small children, or any individual 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. NMED and DOH do feel that sensitive groups should practice caution until the smoke dissipates. Real-time air monitoring data is available for some areas of the state at NMED's website at <http://air.nmenv.state.nm.us/>.

In areas without real-time particulate monitors, 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 Groups	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 health effect and 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 contact Marissa Bardino, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314 or Deborah Busemeyer, DOH Communications Director at (505) 827-2619.

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