



NEWS RELEASE

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The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.

Contact: David Morgan, Department of Health
Cell: (575) 649-0754 david.morgan@state.nm.us
Allison Scott Majure, Environment
Cell: (505) 231-8800, Allison.majure@state.nm.us

Smoke Advisory Remains in Effect Due to Widespread Smoke

Santa Fe – Widespread smoke from fires is impacting many New Mexico communities. A smoke advisory issued by the New Mexico Environment Department and the New Mexico Department of Health on Wednesday remains in effect. Increased smoke concentrations are expected throughout the weekend, especially in communities closest to these fires: the Dog Head Fire west of Estancia, the North Fire south of Magdalena, and the Cedar Creek Fire in Eastern Arizona.

“We are reminding New Mexicans to be mindful of the smoke. People with heart and/or lung disease, adults over age 65, young children, and pregnant women should minimize outdoor activities during times when the visibility is about 5 miles or less. Be sure you have the medicines needed for chronic heart or lung disease,” said Department of Health Secretary Lynn Gallagher. “When the visibility starts to go below 3 miles, sensitive groups should avoid outdoor activities until air quality improves.”

The New Mexico Environment Department operates air quality monitors 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 air monitors can be found at <http://drdasnm1.alink.com/>. The Environment Department and U.S. Forest Service are coordinating to place a monitor in Estancia. The U.S. Forest Service also has a temporary air quality monitor in Magdalena. Monitoring data for U.S. Forest Service monitors can be found at <http://app.airsis.com/USFS/>.

Because air quality monitors are not everywhere, the eyes are the best tools to determine if it is safe to be outside. Even if the smell of smoke is apparent, the air quality may still be good. As a rule of thumb, if visibility is over five miles, the air quality is generally good. However, no matter how far one can see, if individuals are having health effects from smoke exposure, they are advised to take extra care to stay inside or get to an area with better air quality and to also see a doctor or healthcare professional as needed.

(more)

It is advised that New Mexicans keep indoor air as clean as possible during wildfires. Tips include:

- Keep windows and doors closed.
- Do not smoke or use vapor cigarettes indoors because these add to the air pollution.
- If you cool your home with a swamp cooler try not to run it when the air is filled with smoke. Most swamp cooler filters cannot adequately remove the fine smoke particles. If it smells like your swamp cooler is bringing in smoke, it's best to turn the unit off until the outside air quality improves.
- When you use an air conditioner keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside.
- If you do not have an air conditioner and it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed, seek shelter elsewhere such as at a cooling center or at a relative's or friend's home. During the day consider going to public libraries, senior centers, community centers and other public places that have air conditioning (refrigerated air).

For other health protection tips, guidance on distances and visibility, please visit www.nmtracking.org/fire, which includes three maps with examples. For more information about fires in New Mexico, visit: <https://nmfireinfo.com/>. Information on fires in Arizona and throughout the U.S. is available at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/>.

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