

**SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR**Butch Tongate, *Cabinet Secretary*J.C. Borrego, *Deputy Secretary***NEWS RELEASE****March 7, 2017**

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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.*

**Environment and Health Departments Issue Smoke Advisory  
for Potential Impacts to Eastern New Mexico**

**Santa Fe** – The New Mexico Environment Department and New Mexico Department of Health today issued a smoke advisory for areas of New Mexico that are affected by smoke from fires burning in the Texas panhandle. Smoke would be most likely in the evenings and early morning hours following burning, but would be likely to linger in affected areas until inversions lift, typically by mid- to late-morning hours. Areas most likely to be affected by smoke include the eastern plains from Clayton south to Carlsbad.

“Smoke can hurt your eyes, irritate your respiratory system, and intensify chronic heart and lung problems,” said Department of Health Cabinet Secretary, Lynn Gallagher. “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. When the visibility starts to go below 3 miles, sensitive groups should avoid outdoor activities until air quality improves.”

Because there are not air quality monitors available in the area, your eyes are your best tools to determine if it's safe to be outside. Even if you smell smoke, the air quality may still be good. Remember: if visibility is over 5 miles, the air quality is generally good. However, no matter how far you can see, if you are having health effects from smoke exposure then take extra care to stay inside or get to an area with better air quality. You should also see your doctor or healthcare professional as needed.

For guidance on distances and visibility, please visit <https://nmtracking.org/fire>, which includes three maps with examples.

When you are advised to stay indoors, keep indoor air as clean as possible. 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 and other public places that may have air conditioning. For multi-day events, consider staying somewhere else until the air quality improves. Get more stay cool tips here: <https://nmtracking.org/health/heatstress/Heat.html>.

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