

Wild Fire Prevention Program

This Wildfire Prevention Program has been created to comply with California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5141.1. Protection from Wildfire Smoke.

*Riverside Community
College District*

*Last revision date:
01-07-2026*

Wild Fire Prevention Program Review and Update Log

Please review and update the written program annually and track the revision in the log below.

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Wild Fire Prevention Plan

Introduction

California Code of Regulations, title 8, [section 5141.1](#) applies to most outdoor workplaces where the current Air Quality Index (current AQI) for airborne particulate matter 2.5 micrometers or smaller (PM2.5) is 151 or greater, and where employers should reasonably anticipate that employees could be exposed to wildfire smoke.

Wildfire smoke is composed of harmful chemicals and tiny particles suspended in the air that present a significant health hazard for workers exposed to it. These particles can irritate the lungs and cause serious or even fatal health effects, such as:

- Reduced lung function
- Bronchitis
- Worsening of asthma
- Heart failure

Applicability

This Wildfire Prevention Procedures Manual has been created to comply with [California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5141.1. Protection from Wildfire Smoke.](#)

Scope

This plan will apply when the current Air Quality Index (current AQI) for PM2.5 is 151 or greater and employees are reasonably anticipated to be exposed to wildfire smoke.

This plan will not apply to the following workplaces or operations:

- Enclosed buildings where windows, doors, and other openings are kept closed and the air is filtered by mechanical ventilation
- Enclosed vehicles where windows, doors, and other openings are kept closed and the air is filtered by a cabin air filter
- Where worksite measurements of PM2.5 show that the current AQI does not equal or exceed 151
- Employees exposed to a current AQI of 151 or greater for less than one hour during their shift

Responsibilities

The Director of Risk Management, Vice President of Business Services and Department managers are responsible for implementing the plan.

- Maintain, review, and update the plan at least annually and whenever necessary to include new or modified tasks and procedures.
- Provide trainings to all employees who are covered by this program.
- Maintain an adequate supply of N95 respirators.
- Ensure this program is being followed and enforced.

Direct Supervisors must:

- Ensure employees are trained
- Determine the Air Quality Index (AQI) when employees may be exposed to wildfire smoke
- Check AQI for PM2.5 level before each shift and periodically during the day when the AQI exceeds 151
- Inform employees periodically of the current AQI for PM2.5 and protective measures available
- Implement control measures for outdoor workers exposed to wildfire smoke
- Ensure availability of N95 respirators and enforce required respirator use when the AQI for PM2.5 is greater than 500
- Take action when an employee reports symptoms of poor air quality, such as providing clean air breaks or removing employees from poor AQI environments

Employees

Employees who work outdoors and are expected to be exposed to wildfire smoke will:

- Understand and follow the requirements of this program
- Attend all trainings
- Wear a respirator when AQI PM2.5 is greater than 500
- Inform their supervisor if they are having issues wearing a respirator • Request a N95 for voluntary use when AQI PM2.5 is 151 or greater
- Inform their supervisor if air quality is getting worse
- Inform their supervisor if suffering from symptoms of poor air quality such as asthma attacks, chest pain, nausea, or trouble breathing

Identification of Harmful Exposure

Employee exposure to PM2.5 will be determined at the start of each shift and periodically thereafter, as needed to protect the health of employees, by any of the following methods:

Check AQI forecasts and the current AQI for PM2.5 from any of the following websites:

- U.S. EPA AirNow, the Interagency Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program, the U.S. Forest Service, the California Air Resources Board, the local air pollution control district, or the local air quality management district; or
- Obtain AQI forecasts and the current AQI for PM2.5 directly from the U.S. EPA, the Interagency Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program, the U.S. Forest Service, the California Air Resources Board, the local air pollution control district, or the local air quality management district by downloading the app, or other effective method; or
- Measure PM2.5 levels at the worksite and convert the PM2.5 levels to the corresponding AQI in accordance with Appendix A of T8 CCR 5141.1.

The AQI is the method used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to report air quality on a real-time basis. Current AQI is also referred to as the “NowCast,” and represents data collected over time periods of varying length in order to reflect present conditions as accurately as possible.

The current AQI is divided into six categories as shown in the table below.

Air Quality Index (AQI) Category for PM2.5	Levels of Health Concern
0 to 50	Good
51 to 100	Moderate
101 to 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
151 to 200	Unhealthy
201 to 300	Very Unhealthy
301 to 500	Hazardous

Communication

Wildfire smoke hazards will be communicated to employees in a way that will be easily understandable. Employees will be informed of the current AQI for PM2.5 and protective measures available to reduce exposure to wildfire smoke. Employees will also be encouraged to inform their supervisors of worsening air quality and adverse symptoms that may be the result of wildfire smoke exposure such as asthma attacks, difficulty breathing, and chest pain.

Control of Harmful Exposures

The following controls will be used to reduce harmful exposures to employees:

- Engineering controls will be used to reduce employee exposure to PM2.5 to less than a current AQI of 151. This will be achieved by providing enclosed buildings, structures, or vehicles where the air is filtered.
- Administrative controls will be used whenever engineering controls are not feasible or do not reduce employee exposures to PM2.5 to less than a current AQI of 151. This will include relocating

work to a location where the current AQI for PM2.5 is lower, changing work schedules, reducing work intensity, or providing additional rest periods.

- ◆ Respiratory protective equipment will be used as follows:
 - ◊ Respirators will be provided to employees for voluntary use when the current AQI for PM2.5 is equal to or greater than 151, but does not exceed 500.
 - ◊ Respirators will be used in accordance with T8 CCR 5144.
 - be NIOSH-approved and effectively protect the wearers from inhalation of PM2.5, such as N95 filtering facepiece respirators.
 - be cleaned or replaced as appropriate, stored, and maintained, so that they do not present a health hazard to users.

Note: Employees whose only use of respirators involves the voluntary use of filtering facepieces, such as N95 respirators, fit testing and medical evaluations are not required by section 5144.

Respirator use will be required when the current AQI for PM2.5 exceeds 500. Respirators shall be used in accordance with section 5144 and the respirators will have an assigned protection factor so that the PM2.5 levels inside the respirator correspond to an AQI less than 151.

Training

Training will be annually provided to all employees and supervisors who can be potentially exposed to wildfire smoke. Training is available through the online learning platform Vision Resource Center and via zoom at least once a year.

Appendix 1-Air Quality Index

Air Quality Guide for Particle Pollution

Harmful particle pollution is one of our nation's most common air pollutants. Use the chart below to help reduce your exposure and protect your health. For your local air quality forecast, visit www.aimow.gov

Air Quality Index	Who Needs to be Concerned?	What Should I Do?
Good (0-50)	It's a great day to be active outside.	
Moderate (51-100)	Some people who may be unusually sensitive to particle pollution.	<p>Unusually sensitive people: Consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath. These are signs to take it easier.</p> <p>Everyone else: It's a good day to be active outside.</p>
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101-150)	Sensitive groups include people with heart or lung disease, older adults, children and teenagers.	<p>Sensitive groups: Reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. It's OK to be active outside, but take more breaks and do less intense activities. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath.</p> <p>People with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep quick relief medicine handy.</p> <p>If you have heart disease: Symptoms such as palpitations, shortness of breath, or unusual fatigue may indicate a serious problem. If you have any of these, contact your health care provider.</p>
Unhealthy (151-200)	Everyone	<p>Sensitive groups: Avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Consider moving activities indoors or rescheduling.</p> <p>Everyone else: Reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. Take more breaks during outdoor activities.</p>
Very Unhealthy (201-300)	Everyone	<p>Sensitive groups: Avoid all physical activity outdoors. Move activities indoors or reschedule to a time when air quality is better.</p> <p>Everyone else: Avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Consider moving activities indoors or rescheduling to a time when air quality is better.</p>
Hazardous (301-500)	Everyone	<p>Everyone: Avoid all physical activity outdoors.</p> <p>Sensitive groups: Remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Follow tips for keeping particle levels low indoors.</p>

Key Facts to Know About Particle Pollution:

- Particle pollution can cause serious health problems – including asthma attacks, heart attacks, strokes and early death.
- Particle pollution can be a problem at any time of the year, depending on where you live.
- You can reduce your exposure to pollution and still get exercise! Use daily Air Quality Index (AQI) forecasts at www.airnow.gov to plan your activity.

What Is particle pollution?

Particle pollution comes from many different sources. Fine particles (2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller) come from power plants, industrial processes, vehicle tailpipes, woodstoves, and wildfires. Coarse particles (between 2.5 and 10 micrometers) come from crushing and grinding operations, road dust, and some agricultural operations.

Why Is particle pollution a problem?

Particle pollution is linked to a number of health problems, including coughing, wheezing, reduced lung function, asthma attacks, heart attacks and strokes. It also is linked to early death.

Do I need to be concerned?

While it's always smart to pay attention to air quality where you live, **some people may be at greater risk from particle pollution.** They include:

- People with cardiovascular disease (diseases of the heart and blood vessels)
- People with lung disease, including asthma and COPD
- Children and teenagers
- Older adults
- Research indicates that obesity or diabetes may increase risk.
- New or expectant mothers may also want to take precautions to protect the health of their babies.

How can I protect myself?

Use AQI forecasts to plan outdoor activities. On days when the AQI forecast is unhealthy, take simple steps to reduce your exposure:

- Choose a less-strenuous activity
- Shorten your outdoor activities
- Reschedule activities
- Spend less time near busy roads

When particle levels are high outdoors, they can be high indoors – unless the building has a good filtration system.

Keep particles lower indoors:

- Eliminate tobacco smoke
- Reduce your use of wood stoves and fireplaces
- Use HEPA air filters and air cleaners designed to reduce particles
- Don't burn candles

Can I help reduce particle pollution?

Yes! Here are a few tips.

- Drive less: carpool, use public transportation, bike or walk
- Choose ENERGY STAR appliances
- Set thermostats higher in summer and lower in winter
- Don't burn leaves, garbage, plastic or rubber
- Keep car, boat and other engines tuned



Office of Air Quality and Radiation (6301A)
EPA-456/F-15-005
www.airnow.gov
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Understanding the **AIR QUALITY INDEX (AQI)**

Good	No health impacts expected. AQI 0-50
Moderate	Very sensitive people may wish to limit outdoor exertion. AQI 51-100
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Sensitive people should limit outdoor exertion. AQI 101-150
Unhealthy	Everyone should limit exertion outdoors. AQI 151-200
Very Unhealthy	Sensitive people should avoid all outdoor activity. AQI 201-300
Hazardous	Everyone should avoid all outdoor activity. AQI 301-500

weather.gov



Air Quality and Health

Exposure to air pollutants such as particulate matter and ground-level ozone can cause:



Headaches



Difficulty breathing



Irritated eyes,
sinuses



Chest pains,
asthma attacks



Fatigue



Irritated throat,
increased coughing

Poor air quality can be hazardous to anyone, and it can aggravate health problems such as asthma, heart disease, and lung disease.

Seniors, children and those with compromised immune systems are especially at risk.

weather.gov



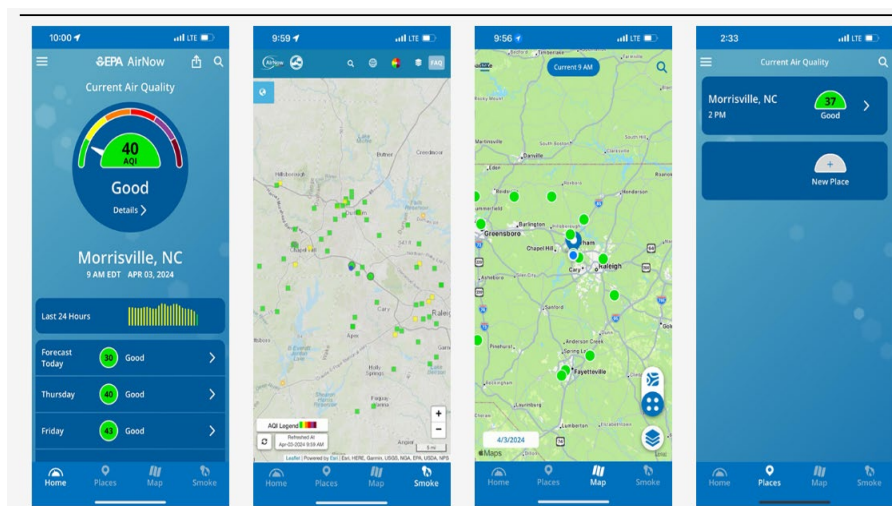
Appendix 2-Air quality Apps



[South Coast AQMD Mobile App](#)



[AirNow Mobile App | AirNow.gov](#)



Appendix 3-Fact Sheet Workers Exposed to Wildfire Smoke Hazards

California Department of Industrial Relations
Division of Occupational Safety & Health
Publications Unit

SAFETY & HEALTH

FACT SHEET



Workers Exposed to Wildfire Smoke Hazards

What are the hazards?

Wildfire smoke can be a hazard for workers even when they are not close to a fire. The smoke contains very fine particles in the air, also called particulate matter (PM). The major health concerns are the smallest particles called "PM2.5" because they are 2.5 microns in diameter or smaller. That is much smaller than the diameter of a human hair. PM2.5 can irritate the lungs and cause serious or even fatal health effects, such as:

- Reduced lung function
- Bronchitis
- Worsening of asthma
- Heart failure

Cal/OSHA has a regulation, **section 5141.1**, Protection From Wildfire Smoke, that requires employers to protect workers from unhealthy levels of PM2.5. This fact sheet provides an overview, not all the details of the section 5141.1 requirements.

When does an employer have to comply with section 5141.1?

Two conditions must be in place:

1. The current Air Quality Index (AQI) for PM2.5 for the location where workers are working is 151 or greater. The current AQI is the method used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to report air quality.
2. The employer should reasonably anticipate that workers could be exposed to wildfire smoke.

Employers with workplaces and operations in any of the following conditions do not have to implement section 5141.1:

- Enclosed buildings or structures in which the air is filtered by a mechanical ventilation system, and windows, doors, bays and other openings are kept closed except when doors are opened to enter or exit.
- Enclosed vehicles in which the air is filtered by a cabin air filter and the employer ensures that windows, doors and other openings are kept closed except when doors are opened to enter or exit.
- The employer measures the concentration of PM2.5 in the air and shows that the current AQI is not 151 or higher.
- Workers exposed to a current AQI for PM2.5 of 151 or



greater for a total of one hour or less during a shift.

- Firefighters engaged in wildland firefighting.

What does an employer have to do if section 5141.1 applies to their workplace?

- **Identify harmful exposures:** Determine what exposures to PM2.5 their workers have at the start of each shift and then periodically, as needed.
- **Communicate with workers:** Inform workers of wildfire smoke hazards so all workers understand. This includes encouraging workers to inform their employer—without fear of retaliation—of worsening air quality and symptoms that might be related to wildfire smoke. The employer must inform workers about:
 - The current AQI for PM2.5.
 - Protective measures available to them to reduce their wildfire smoke exposures.
- **Train and instruct workers:** Provide training to workers so that they understand at least the following information regarding wildfire smoke:
 - The health effects.
 - The right to obtain medical treatment without fear of retaliation.
 - How workers can find out the current AQI for PM2.5.
 - The requirements of the Cal/OSHA wildfire smoke standard.
 - The employer's two-way communication system.
 - The employer's methods to protect workers from wildfire smoke.
 - The importance, limitations, and benefits of using a respirator.

- How to properly put on and use the respirators provided by the employer.
- **Control harmful exposures to workers:** Reduce workers' exposures to wildfire smoke in the following ways:
 1. **Engineering Controls:** For instance, enclose the work area and filter the air so that workers' exposure to PM2.5 is less than a current AQI of 151, or to the extent feasible.
 2. **Administrative Controls:** If that is not feasible or enough, see if they can relocate the work to another location where the current AQI for PM2.5 is lower, change work schedules, reduce work intensity or provide more rest periods.
 3. **Respirators:** Provide NIOSH-approved respirators if workers' exposure to PM2.5 cannot be reduced to a current AQI of less than 151.
 - **Where the current AQI for PM2.5 is from 151 to 500:** Employers must provide—and encourage the use of—respirators, such as N95 masks, to all workers for voluntary use. Employers must ensure that workers:
 - Clean or replace their respirators as appropriate, store and maintain them so that they do not present a health hazard to users.
 - Are provided the content of [Appendix B](#) of section 5141.1 as part of their training.
 - **Where the current AQI for PM2.5 is higher than 500:** Employers must provide—and require workers to use—respirators that will reduce exposure to PM2.5 inside the respirator to an equivalent of an AQI less than 151.

How to find out if the air will be unhealthy

Workers can ask their employer, as they must use one of the following methods to determine the current AQI:

- Check AQI forecasts and the current AQI for PM2.5 from either of the following websites or directly by telephone, email, text or other effective means:
 - [The U.S. EPA AirNow](#)
 - [The U.S. Forest Service Interagency Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program](#)
 - [The California Air Resources Board](#)
 - [The local air pollution control district](#)
 - [The local air quality management district](#)

- Measure PM2.5 levels at the worksite and convert that to the corresponding AQI using [Appendix A](#) of section 5141.1.

There are some exceptions where the employer does not need to determine PM2.5 exposures:

1. The employer assumes the current AQI for PM2.5 is greater than 500 and uses the engineering, administrative and respiratory protection controls discussed above.
2. In emergency operations (rescue and evacuation; and utilities, communications, and medical operations that directly aid emergency or firefighting) where the employer:
 - Assumes the current AQI for PM2.5 is 151 or greater.
 - Provides enough NIOSH-approved respirators to all workers for voluntary use.
 - Encourages workers to use them.
 - Ensures respirators are cleaned or replaced as appropriate, stored, and maintained so that they do not become a health hazard to users.
 - Ensures [Appendix B](#) of section 5141.1 is used for workers' training.

How to protect yourself

- Check the AQI forecasts and current AQI for PM2.5 yourself for the area where you are working by using the same websites listed for your employer to use.
- You have the right to file a complaint with Cal/OSHA if you feel your working conditions are not safe. First, check for the Cal/OSHA district office that has jurisdiction over your location in one of these two ways, then give them a call:
 - Check the poster that all employers must display that lists the addresses and telephone numbers of the Cal/OSHA offices.
 - Go to www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/Complaint.htm.

Other resources

Cal/OSHA

- [Worker Safety and Health in Wildfire Regions](#)
- [Respiratory Protection Fact Sheet](#)

Cal/OSHA regulations

- [Protection from Wildfire Smoke](#)
- [Respiratory Protection](#)

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For assistance regarding this subject matter, employers may contact
Cal/OSHA Consultation Services at: 1-800-963-9424 or InfoCons@dir.ca.gov
www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/consultation.html

