



PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aero Fire Prompts Air Quality Advisory Issued by Calaveras County Public Health and Air Pollution Control District



Office of Emergency Services
209-754-2890



Health and Human Services
209-754-6460



Sheriff's Office
209-754-6601

Date: Tuesday, June 18, 2024
Contact: County of Calaveras – Aero Fire Hotline
Phone: (209) 754-6777

San Andreas, CA - The Calaveras County Health Officer and Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District has issued a joint air quality advisory to notify the public of the potential for poor air quality conditions due to smoke from the Aero Fire in Calaveras County. This extended advisory shall remain in effect until Tuesday, June 18, at 10PM and may be further extended depending on conditions. Smoke concentrations will vary across the county and may be severe in multiple locations over several days.

As of today, Copperopolis is experiencing an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 127 indicating unhealthy air quality for sensitive groups. The below chart shows health recommendations for each AQI level.

	US AQI Level	PM2.5 (µg/m³)	Health Recommendation (for 24 hour exposure)
	Good 0-50	0-12.0	Air quality is satisfactory and poses little or no risk.
	Moderate 51-100	12.1-35.4	Sensitive individuals should avoid outdoor activity as they may experience respiratory symptoms.
	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups 101-150	35.5-55.4	General public and sensitive individuals in particular are at risk to experience irritation and respiratory problems.
	Unhealthy 151-200	55.5-150.4	Increased likelihood of adverse effects and aggravation to the heart and lungs among general public.
	Very Unhealthy 201-300	150.5-250.4	General public will be noticeably affected. Sensitive groups should restrict outdoor activities.
	Hazardous 301+	250.5+	General public at high risk of experiencing strong irritations and adverse health effects. Should avoid outdoor activities.



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The AQI in your area can be found here:

<https://map.purpleair.com/1/mAQI/a10/p604800/cC0#10.11/38.2113/-120.7029>

Impacts from smoke may affect all areas of Calaveras County from the lower foothills up into the High Country area, dependent upon wind direction, until the fire is extinguished.

Shifting overnight winds may cause sudden increases of smoke concentration while asleep. Consider keeping the windows closed to keep out smoky air. A high pressure ridge in the atmosphere and expected lighter winds may hold smoke in the area for several days.

Smoke contains very tiny particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs. Wildfire smoke can irritate your lungs, cause inflammation, affect your immune system, and make you more prone to lung infections. Symptoms may include, but are not limited to, coughing, watery and itchy eyes, headache, scratchy throat, and difficulty in breathing.

"If you can see or smell smoke, avoid unnecessary outdoor activities. Poor air quality caused by the nearby fires can lead to health problems especially for those at increased risk which include people with chronic health conditions, those over 65 years old, and those who have or those who are recovering from a respiratory virus," said Dr. Rene Ramirez, Calaveras County Health Officer. "People at higher risk should take steps to lessen their exposure to smoky air," he added. Consider taking any or all the following steps to reduce your exposure to smoke.

1. Find out what the air quality is in your area

- Use the information about how far you can see (visibility) found in the table at the end of this advisory to estimate the air quality.
- Go to fire.airnow.gov. This EPA website is the most accurate source of verified air quality data.
- Check purpleair.com. This site provides real-time data for locations around the county.
- Keep in mind that air quality can change rapidly at different times during the day due to wind shifts; therefore, it is important to monitor the smoke throughout the day in your area and make outdoor plans accordingly.



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2. Limit your exposure to smoke

- Limit outdoor exertion and physical activity.
- Stay indoors with the windows and doors closed, if possible.
- Reduce unnecessary driving. If traveling through smoke-impacted areas, be sure that your vehicle's ventilation system is on re-circulate.

3. Don't let smoke indoors

- Keep doors and windows closed.
- Eliminate drafts such as through pet doors. Place towels at the base of all substantial gaps under doors. Consider sealing with plastic sheeting any especially leaky windows. Open fireplaces may also need to be sealed with plastic.
- Run your air-conditioner only if it does not bring smoke in from the outdoors. Change the standard air conditioner filter to a medium or high efficiency filter if your HVAC can support it (MERV 13). If available, use the recirculate or recycle setting on the unit.
- Whenever you can, use air conditioners, fans, and window shades to keep your cleaner air space comfortably cool on hot days. Don't use a window fan to bring in outside air.

4. Clean your indoor air

- Avoid activities that create more indoor and outdoor air pollution, such as smoking, frying foods, sweeping, and vacuuming.
- Use a portable air cleaner in one or more rooms. Portable air cleaners work best when run continuously with doors and windows closed.
- If you don't own an air purifier, a "Do It Yourself" air filter can be made by attaching a 20" x 20" house filter rated at MERV 13 to the back of a

20" box fan. Instructions for building these can be found at <https://ema.calaverasgov.us/Air-Pollution-Control/Wildfire-Smoke-Information>

- Sensitive individuals should consider making one room in the house more protected. It is easier to clean the air in one room than it is to clean the air in the whole house.
- Get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can. COVID-19 vaccines help protect you from getting sick or severely ill with COVID-19 and may also protect people around you, especially when physical distancing is difficult. Congested lung problems can be made worse by smoke exposure.

4. Wear a mask if smoke exposure is unavoidable.



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- Cloth masks that are used to slow the spread of COVID-19 by blocking respiratory droplets offer little protection against wildfire smoke. They might not catch small, harmful particles in smoke that can harm your health.
- N95 and KN95 respirators can provide protection from wildfire smoke.
- Tiny smoke particles can build up in the lungs over time, even in healthy people. It can be difficult for the lungs to expel these inhaled

particles. N95 and KN95 masks, worn properly (not leaking around the edges), can help prevent this buildup.

- Always wear a N95 or KN95 mask when exposed to very unhealthy or hazardous air quality. Consider wearing these masks for any smoke exposure.

While people may experience varying degrees of symptoms, some people are at greater risk of harmful health effects from wildfire smoke such as:

- Children under 18 years of age
- Adults aged 65 and older
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic health conditions such as heart or lung disease, asthma, and diabetes
- People who work outdoors
- People who are immunocompromised or taking drugs that suppress the immune system
- People who currently have or who are recovering from COVID-19

Anyone experiencing serious symptoms due to smoke should contact a health professional. Persons who have a respiratory-related illness may also wish to consult their health care provider if they are experiencing smoke exposure.

The Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District will continue monitoring the air quality in the county and will provide additional advisories as air quality conditions evolve.

Use the chart below as a guideline for outdoor activities. The distance you can see (visibility) can be an indicator of how concentrated the smoke is in your location.



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Recommendations for Outdoor Physical Activity during Smoky Conditions

This guide is intended to help you make decisions on outdoor activities when it's smoky outside.

Group information is listed below.

Length of Outdoor Physical Activity	Good for Groups (1 - 3)	Moderate for Group 1 Individuals	Unhealthy for Group 1 & 2 Individuals	Unhealthy for Group 1 - 3 Individuals	Very Unhealthy for Group 1 - 3 Individuals	Hazardous for Group 1 - 3 Individuals
	Visibility > 10 miles	Visibility 5 - 10 miles	Visibility 3 - 5 miles	Visibility 1.5 - 3 miles	Visibility 1 - 1.5 miles	Visibility < 1 mile
30 Minutes	No Restrictions	Group 1 Individuals should monitor or reduce physical activity.	Groups 1 & 2 should limit time spent outdoors or reduce physical activity.	Groups 1 & 2 should avoid the outdoors and Group 3 should reduce physical activity.	All Groups should avoid the outdoors and physical activity.	All Groups should avoid the outdoors and physical activity.
1 Hour	No Restrictions	Group 1 Individuals should monitor or reduce physical activity.	Groups 1 & 2 should considerably limit time spent outdoors and reduce physical activity.	All Groups should avoid the outdoors and physical activity.		
2 Hours or More	No Restrictions	Group 1 Individuals should limit prolonged physical activity.	Groups 1 & 2 should avoid the outdoors and Group 3 should reduce physical activity.	All Groups should avoid the outdoors and physical activity.		

WHICH GROUP ARE YOU IN?		
Group 1 Individuals	Group 2 Individuals	Group 3 Individuals
This group includes those with respiratory or heart disease, angina, pulmonary disease, asthma, emphysema or any other disease that may be impacted by any level of smoke.	This group includes those with asthma, or recent respiratory infections, those who experience seasonal allergies, work outside, or in general are more sensitive to the acute effects of smoke.	This group includes those who are more resistant to the short term effects of smoke. Healthy people may also experience adverse effects of smoke depending on duration and exposure.

For more information call the Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District at (209) 754-6601 or Calaveras County Health and Human Services at (209) 754-6448.

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