

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | May 29, 2019

Department of Environmental Quality urges caution during smoky conditions

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) advises residents, especially those with respiratory conditions, to consider limiting prolonged outdoor activities while smoky conditions remain across the state. Wildfires in northern Canada are sending smoke across North Dakota, and local agricultural burning may be adding to smoke in some areas.

Extremely small particles of ash and soot, or particulate matter, have been increasing over the last few hours across eastern North Dakota. Particulate matter can irritate the respiratory system, especially for those who suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or conditions such as asthma and allergies. The NDDEQ advises people with respiratory conditions, the elderly and young children to avoid prolonged outdoor exposure.

High particulate numbers, coupled with higher temperatures over the next few days, could heighten the complications. People reacting to smoke to the extent that it is affecting breathing should seek immediate help from a medical provider.

The NDDEQ's Division of Air Quality is closely monitoring its air sampling network across the state. At this time most of the smoke impact seems to be concentrated in the eastern part of the state. If conditions in western North Dakota become unfavorable, the department will follow up with additional information.

For up-to-date information on the region's current air quality and tips on respiratory protection during a smoke event, visit https://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=topics.smoke_wildfires .

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