

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | June 14, 2023

Department of Environmental Quality urges caution during smoky conditions

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality advises residents, especially those with respiratory conditions, to consider limiting prolonged outdoor activities while smoky conditions remain across northcentral and eastern North Dakota today. Wildfires in northwestern Canada are sending smoke across most of the state.

Environmental Quality closely monitors its air sampling network across the state. Particulate matter, or extremely small particles of ash and soot in the smoke, has been increasing overnight in northcentral and eastern North Dakota. High particulate numbers across the state, coupled with a weather front will push additional smoke across most of the state. Higher ground level impacts at this point seem to be concentrated in the northcentral and eastern portions of the state.

In general, Environmental Quality advises everyone to use common sense and avoid prolonged exposure outdoors. 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. Environmental Quality advises people with respiratory conditions, the elderly and young children to avoid prolonged outdoor exposure. People reacting to smoke to the extent that it affects breathing should seek immediate help from a medical provider. General health-related smoke questions can be directed to the Health and Human Services Operating Center at (701) 328-0707.

If you see or smell smoke, ways to protect your health include:

- Staying inside with windows and doors closed until smoke levels subside.
- Reducing outside physical activity.
- Setting air conditioning units and car vent systems to re-circulate to prevent outside air from moving inside.

What you should do depends on the air quality index and your personal health status. Due to the active wildfires and changing wind patterns, air quality can be variable and unpredictable. Air quality may improve at times or get worse very quickly.

For up-to-date information on the region's current air quality and respiratory protection tips during a smoke event, visit fire.airnow.gov. The AirNow mobile phone app, and many other weather apps, also include air quality information.

Additional Resources

- Air Quality Index: <https://www.airnow.gov> also check the AirNow Fire and smoke Map
- Air Quality Monitoring Information: <https://deq.nd.gov/AQ/monitoring/>
- General Smoke-related Health Questions: (701) 328-0707
- Weather Forecasting: <https://graphical.weather.gov/sectors/northdakota.php>
- Wildfire Smoke Prediction Patterns: <https://firesmoke.ca/forecasts/current/>
- *Questions about the continuation of outdoor activities, events, and sports practice should be directed to the local administrators in charge.*

For more information, contact:

Ryan Mills

Division of Air Quality

PHONE: 701-328-5188 | EMAIL: rmills@nd.gov | www.deq.nd.gov