

NEWS | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | October 8, 2024

Department of Environmental Quality urges caution during smoky conditions

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality is closely monitoring wildfire smoke from both local fires and wildfires in the western U.S. as it moves through the state. Due to current weather patterns, residents may experience intermittent smoke over the next few days. Environmental Quality advises residents, especially those with respiratory conditions, to consider limiting prolonged outdoor activities when smoke is present.

Environmental Quality operates the statewide air sampling network, which provides real-time data to the national Air Quality monitoring system, AirNow. This ensures the public receives timely updates and can take necessary precautions. For the latest air quality information, visit fire.airnow.gov.

The 2024 Updated Air Quality Index (AQI) color designations are:

- **Yellow** – Moderate
- **Orange** – Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
- **Red** – Unhealthy
- **Purple** – Very Unhealthy
- **Maroon** – Hazardous

When air quality is in the “Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups” to “Unhealthy” range, individuals with respiratory conditions, children, and seniors may experience health effects during outdoor activities. To reduce health issues, sensitive groups should limit prolonged or strenuous outdoor activity. Anyone experiencing difficulty breathing should seek medical attention immediately.

For health-related smoke inquiries, contact the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services Operations Center at (866) 207-2880.

How to Protect Yourself:

- Stay indoors with doors and windows closed until smoke levels decrease.
- Reduce outdoor physical activity.
- Set air conditioning units and car vents to re-circulate to keep outdoor air from entering.

For real-time air quality updates and advice on respiratory protection during smoke events, visit fire.airnow.gov. The AirNow mobile app and many weather apps also provide air quality updates.

Additional Resources

- Air Quality Index: <https://www.airnow.gov> (including the AirNow Fire and Smoke Map)
- Air Quality Monitoring Information: <https://deq.nd.gov/AQ/monitoring/>
- Weather Forecasting: <https://graphical.weather.gov/sectors/northdakota.php>
- Wildfire Smoke Prediction Patterns: <https://firesmoke.ca/forecasts/current/>
- *Questions about outdoor activities, events, and sports practice, contact the local administrators in charge.*

For more information, contact:

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