

NEWS | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | May 30, 2025

Department of Environmental Quality urges caution during smoky conditions

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality is actively monitoring wildfires in Canada. Based on current weather patterns, residents across the state may experience wildfire smoke affecting air quality over the next few days. Environmental Quality advises residents, especially those with respiratory conditions, to consider limiting prolonged outdoor activities when smoky conditions exist at their location.

Environmental Quality closely monitors its air sampling network across the state, so the public is informed and able to take any necessary precautions. Residents are encouraged to use the [AirNow.gov](https://airnow.gov) website and mobile app to access the current air quality conditions.

Environmental Quality advises everyone to use common sense when wildfire smoke adversely impacts air quality. What you should do depends on the air quality index and your personal health status. When air quality is in the “unhealthy for sensitive groups” to “unhealthy” range, people who are in sensitive groups (including those with respiratory conditions, the elderly and young children) may experience health effects during outdoor activities. To decrease the potential for health issues, sensitive groups of people should limit prolonged or strenuous outdoor activity. People reacting to smoke to the extent that it affects breathing should seek immediate help from a medical provider. Please direct general health-related smoke questions to the Health and Human Services Department of Operations at 866-207-2880.

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

- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed.
- Limit or avoid strenuous outdoor activity.
- Set air conditioners or vehicle vents to recirculate indoor air.

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 air quality, fires, and smoke plumes visit fire.airnow.gov which also provides respiratory protection tips during a smoke event. The AirNow mobile phone app, and many other weather apps, also include air quality information.

Understanding the Air Quality Index (AQI)

The AQI is a color-coded tool that helps you understand what the air quality means for your health. Here's a quick reference:

Daily AQI Color	Levels of Concern	Values of Index	Description of Air Quality
Green	Good	0 to 50	Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Yellow	Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Orange	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.
Red	Unhealthy	151 to 200	Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Purple	Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.
Maroon	Hazardous	301 and higher	Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.

Resources

- Air Quality Index & Map: www.airnow.gov
- Real-time Fire and Smoke Map: fire.airnow.gov
- North Dakota Air Monitoring Data: deq.nd.gov/AQ/monitoring
- National Weather Forecast for ND: graphical.weather.gov – ND
- Wildfire Smoke Forecasts: firesmoke.ca
- *Questions about the continuation of outdoor activities, events, and sports practice should be directed to the local administrators in charge.*

For more information, contact:

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