



County of Tuolumne

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joint Message on Wildland Fire Smoke Impacts for the Tuolumne County Public Health Department and Air Pollution Control District

SONORA, Calif. – Tuolumne County Public Health Department and Air Pollution Control District are issuing a joint air quality advisory through Thursday October 19, 2023, to notify the public of the poor air quality conditions. The air quality Tuolumne County is experiencing stems from local and neighboring prescribed fires in addition to, the naturally ignited Quarry Fire which is actively burning in the Stanislaus National Forest.

Smoke from these fires is impacting air quality in Tuolumne County. Tuolumne County as with several counties in the area are experiencing air quality conditions that range from moderate to very unhealthy dependent on the time of day and where you reside. Warming and drying trends continues through Thursday October 19, 2023. Smoke should lift and generally push east to northeast. Tuolumne County will likely see a shift in winds this evening which will allow smoke to drift towards the southeast. Smoke will generally stay lifted until the overnight hours when smoke potentially will drain into Strawberry, Pinecrest, areas along HWY 108 and lower elevation areas. Heaviest smoke will generally occur between midnight and 6am.

Here are recommended ways to reduce your smoke exposure:

- Stay indoors with the windows and doors closed; if possible, run the air conditioner on the “recirculation” setting
- Limit outdoor physical activity
- Leave the smoke-impacted areas if possible until conditions improve
- Reduce unnecessary driving. If traveling through smoke-impacted areas, be sure that your vehicle’s ventilation system is on recirculate
- Non-HEPA paper face mask filters and bandana-type face coverings are not capable of filtering out extra fine smoke particulates which are much smaller in size. Therefore, they will not be helpful in protecting individuals from smoke-related impacts. Information on the use of masks and face coverings during smoke impacts can be found [here](#).

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. Air quality can change rapidly at different times during the day due to wind shifts; monitor smoke throughout the day and make outdoor plans accordingly. To view local air quality, visit:

<https://map.purpleair.com/1/MAQI/a10/p604800/cC0#11/37.9795/-120.3736>.

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Air Quality Guidance Template for Schools

About the Guidelines:

- These guidelines are based on the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and Centers for Disease Control's [Air Quality and Outdoor Activity Guidance for Schools](#) and [Wildfire Smoke: A Guide for Public Health Officials](#). The guidelines are designed to assist in your decision-making process.
- **Modify the template and chart as needed after consultation with your local county office of education, local school districts, local air district, and local public health experts to determine which air quality monitoring methodology, such as Air Quality Index, total emissions concentration, or other air district-recommended method best applies in your school district.**
- **This template and chart are not intended to supersede existing guidelines and policies developed by local authorities, including the school districts or air districts.**
- These guidelines are intended to assist school districts in making decisions when air quality is poor. *School closure and event cancellation is ultimately a school district-by-school district decision based on local conditions.*
- The impact of smoke depends on the sensitivity of the person and the length of exposure, as outlined in the sample chart below. Children with respiratory or heart conditions are vulnerable to poor air quality and may require extra precautions. School districts should advise parents to consult with their family health care provider.

Using the Guidelines:

- School districts will need to monitor local air quality conditions using air quality tracking tools recommended by their local air district. One example of such a tool is U.S. EPA's air quality index (AQI) available at [AirNow.gov](#). However, because other air quality tracking methodologies may be used in your jurisdiction, it is highly recommended to contact your local air district for advice on the most appropriate tools to use for your region.
- School districts should make decisions about school activities and closures based on air quality measurements and local conditions, such as the availability and quality of school building air filtration and direct observation of onsite indoor/outdoor air quality.
- School districts may wish to consult with their local air district regarding outdoor air and their local public health official regarding indoor air before making a final determination.
- School districts should report any school closures to their County Office of Education for media notification as well as announce closures to families using normal school closure procedures.

School Air Quality Activity Recommendations

PROTECT STUDENT HEALTH DURING POOR AIR QUALITY

Air quality is an important consideration for schools in terms of student activities. Local air districts are available to assist schools with understanding local air quality concerns and actions they can take to protect student health. To find out more, contact your local air district. Visit this page to learn which District serves your area: www.arb.ca.gov/app/dislookup/dislookup.php



The following school activity recommendations are based on consultation with health researchers and several important principles drawn from recent studies.

Modify these levels to correspond with the AQI, emissions concentration, or other air district recommended method for your region.

Activity	Air Quality Level				
	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5 <i>School districts may consider school closures based on site-by-site concerns.</i>
Recess (15min)	No restrictions	Ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.*	Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities.*	Exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities. Sensitive individuals should remain indoors.*	No outdoor activity. All activities should be moved indoors.
P.E. (1hr)	No restrictions	Ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.*	Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities.*	Exercise indoors or limit vigorous outdoor activities to a maximum of 15 minutes. Sensitive individuals should remain indoors.*	No outdoor activity. All activities should be moved indoors.
Athletic Practice & Training (2-4hrs)	No restrictions	Ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.*	Reduce vigorous exercise to 30 minutes per hour of practice time with increased rest breaks and substitutions. Ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.*	Exercise indoors or reduce vigorous exercise to 30 minutes of practice time with increased rest breaks and substitutions. Sensitive individuals should remain indoors.*	No outdoor activity. All activities should be moved indoors.
Scheduled Sporting Events	No restrictions	Ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.*	Increase rest breaks and substitutions per CIF guidelines for extreme heat.** Ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.*	Increase rest breaks and substitutions per CIF guidelines for extreme heat.** Ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.*	Event must be rescheduled or relocated.

* Sensitive Individuals include all those with asthma or other heart/lung conditions

** California Interscholastic Federation