

AIR QUALITY HEALTH ADVISORY -- SMOKE

Issued: Monday, July 19, 2021

Plumas County

The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District and the Plumas County Public Health Agency are updating the current joint Air Quality Health Advisory to notify the public of the possibility of poor air quality conditions resulting from the Dixie Fire and the Beckwourth Complex Fire in addition to other wildfires. Smoke from the Dixie is likely to continue to impact areas to the northeast, including Chester and communities in the Lake Almanor Basin and the Feather River corridor (which have recently experienced very unhealthy air quality). The Indian Valley and Quincy areas may also become smoky at times. As containment has grown on the Beckwourth Fire, smoke production has subsided somewhat, although Frenchman Lake, Dixie Valley, Chilcoot, Portola and surrounding areas will likely continue to experience intermittent smoky conditions. As long as these fires are active, air quality is expected to vary greatly depending on fire behavior and weather conditions, with smoke settling in low areas at night and in the early mornings.

Exposure to elevated PM2.5 (fine particulate matter in smoke) concentrations can result in eye and throat irritation, headaches, nausea, shortness of breath, congestion, coughing, impaired lung function and chest pain, especially among sensitive individuals such as the elderly, children, people with asthma, people with heart or lung conditions, pregnant women and anyone who is exercising or working hard outdoors. People who are affected by, or susceptible to, COVID-19 may be at increased risk from wildfire smoke due to cardiovascular symptoms or a compromised or suppressed immune system.

If you smell or see smoke around you, the following actions are recommended:

- Minimize outdoor activities even if you are healthy;
- Stay indoors with doors and windows closed as much as possible; run the air conditioner on the “recirculate” setting if that is an option;
- People with asthma should follow their asthma management plan;
- People with heart disease, respiratory conditions or chronic health issues should stay indoors;
- Contact your doctor if you have symptoms of cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, or severe fatigue;
- Keep airways moist and stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water;
- Avoid breathing additional smoke, such as from cigarettes or barbecues.

Near real-time air quality conditions for Quincy, Portola, Chester, Truckee and Grass Valley may be found at www.myairdistrict.com (click on your location of interest in the “Local Air Quality” portion). As you view the most recent data, take into consideration that conditions can change rapidly due to wind shifts; it is wise to monitor the smoke throughout the day and make plans accordingly. The smoke may be visible in satellite imagery, available via www.weather.gov/sto (near the bottom of the page).

Additional information about air quality and protecting yourself from wildfire smoke can be found on the following websites:

<https://fire.airnow.gov/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/air/wildfire-smoke/>

To sign up for the Air Quality Health Advisory email list, please visit www.myairdistrict.com.