



Protecting Your Health During Wildfire Season

Wildfires in California now happen more often and do more damage. **Fire season in Northern California is now June through October.** Here are tips to protect your health and stay safe from fire and wildfire smoke.

How Smoke Harms Health

Smoke can irritate the eyes and cause:

- coughing
- trouble breathing
- a scratchy throat
- runny nose
- irritated sinuses
- asthma and breathing conditions to worsen

If you have medical problems that get worse, seek medical treatment right away.

Stay Safe from Smoke

- **Check air quality** with EPA's [Air Quality Index](http://www.airnow.gov) (www.airnow.gov). This will tell you **when to stay indoors**. (See table to the right)
- **Close and seal** windows, doors and fireplace dampers. If that's not possible, find [a cooling center](http://www.achch.org/heat-emergency-resources.html) (www.achch.org/heat-emergency-resources.html) or go to a library.
- **Protect your indoor air.** Do not use hair spray and paint. Use the stove fan when cooking to vent out heat, smoke, and grease. Buying an air purifier with a [HEPA filter](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uXMh6VM5AU) (www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uXMh6VM5AU) can help.
- **In your car, set vents to re-circulate** to keep outside air from coming in.
- **Evacuate** if necessary.

Sign up for a local emergency alert

to get updates on extreme weather, traffic, and emergencies via text, phone, and email.

- Alameda County: [AC Alert \(acalert.gov\)](http://acalert.gov)
- Cities: [Everbridge Nixle](http://www.nixle.com/) (<http://www.nixle.com/>)
- National: [FEMA and other alerts](https://bit.ly/2GU9jMn) (<https://bit.ly/2GU9jMn>)

Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Recommendations
Good (0 to 50)	No health impacts expected
Moderate (51 to 100)	Unusually sensitive people should consider limiting prolonged outdoor exertion
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101 to 150)	Stay indoors if you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are pregnant • are an infant or young child • are elderly • have asthma or other breathing issues or heart disease • are bothered by smoke
Unhealthy (151 to 200)	Everyone, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor activities.
Very Unhealthy (201 to 300)	Everyone, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor activities.

What To Do Now

- Create family [emergency wallet cards](https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/133447) (<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/133447>) with important phone numbers in case family members get separated.
- Gather your [emergency supplies](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/survival-kit-supplies) (<http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/survival-kit-supplies>). Make sure you have enough for each member of the family, including pets, for 72 hours.
- Keep extra medicine handy (up to 2 weeks' worth). Be ready with your plans to treat asthma or diabetes when there is smoke.
- Be ready to [evacuate](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/wildfire#About) (<http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/wildfire#About>). Make a plan for shelter, daily needs, and safe routes to leave. Decide how you will contact your job, schools, family, friends, neighbors.
- Masks may help but cannot protect you from smoke 100%. One-strap paper masks **do not protect enough. Two-strap masks labeled N95 or N100 are better.** They filter out tiny particles but not gases. See these following [images](#) and [video](#) for more information about masks. **If you have chronic lung or heart disease or other medical conditions, check with your healthcare provider before using an N95 mask.**



N95 respirator masks can help protect your lungs from smoke. Straps go above and below the ears.



Do not use this mask. A one-strap paper mask will not protect your lungs from wildfire smoke.

Stay Informed

Conditions can change quickly during a wildfire. Use these for updates. Watch for [Red Flag Warnings](#) issued by the National Weather Service or Fire Dept (<http://www.fire.ca.gov/>).

- **Radio:** [KCBS Radio](#) (760 AM or 106.9 FM)
- **Local TV News:** Channels 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 14 and 26
 - [abc7news](#)
 - [cbs5news](#)
 - [kron4TV](#)
 - [kqedtv](#)
 - [nbcbayarea](#)
 - [ktvu2](#)
 - [KTSF26](#)
 - [Univision/KDTV](#)

• Web Sites

- [Alameda County Public Health Department \(www.acphd.org\)](http://www.acphd.org) may issue a [health alert or advisory](#) during wildfires.
- [Cal Fire \(http://calfire.ca.gov/index\)](http://calfire.ca.gov/index) offers year-round information about fire prevention, track fire outbreaks, containment percentages, evacuations, and air quality.
- [Bay Area Air Quality Management District \(www.BAAQMD.gov\)](http://www.BAAQMD.gov) may issue a [smoke advisory](#), a [Spare the Air](#) notice, or details about unhealthy [air quality](#).