

Washington Guide for Public Health Actions for Wildfire Smoke

This guide is designed for air quality, public health, and other officials making local decisions.

| Air Quality Index | Recommended Public Health Actions Check current and forecast air quality at enviwa.ecology.wa.gov |
|---|--|
| Good (0-50) | <p>Prior to wildfire season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate a local plan for public health actions and distribute preparedness information to the public. • Identify indoor spaces where individuals will seek cleaner air during wildfire smoke events and develop plans to protect indoor air quality, including filtration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indoor spaces used by sensitive groups, such as schools, child care facilities, and long-term care facilities. ○ Community cleaner air settings, such as libraries. ○ Temporary cleaner air shelters. <p>During wildfire season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor wildfires, smoke forecasts, and air quality at WA Smoke Blog. • If forecasts predict smoke in your area, review the Washington Wildfire Response document for Severe Smoke Episodes and the Wildfire Smoke Guide for Public Health Officials. |
| Moderate (51-100) | <p>Above recommendations, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute health information to the public, including steps to take with health advisory categories Washington Air Quality Guide for Particle Pollution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Refer to the WA Smoke Blog for information about wildfires, smoke forecasts, and air quality. ○ Identify and focus outreach efforts for sensitive groups. • Coordinate with public health partners to follow recommended public health actions. • Recommend following the Washington Air Quality Guide for School and Child Care Activities. • For outdoor workers, start following WA Department of Labor and Industries' requirements. |
| Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101-150) | <p>Above recommendations, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend sensitive groups take steps to reduce exposure (limit time outside, avoid strenuous outdoor activity, and follow tips for cleaner indoor air). • Recommend sensitive groups spend time in a cleaner air setting in the community, such as a library, if they cannot maintain cleaner air at home. • Cancel children's outdoor athletic events and practices or move them to an area with safe air quality, either indoors or at a different outside location: Washington Air Quality Guide for School Activities. • For an extended duration of smoke, consider opening a cleaner air shelter for sensitive groups. |
| Unhealthy (151-200) | <p>Above recommendations, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend everyone take steps to reduce exposure (limit time outside, avoid strenuous outdoor activity, and follow tips for cleaner indoor air). • Recommend everyone spend time in an identified cleaner air setting in the community, such as a library, if they cannot maintain cleaner air in their residence. • Consider canceling outdoor public events and activities: Wildfire Smoke Guidance for Canceling Outdoor Events or Activities and Closing Schools. • For an extended duration of smoke, consider opening a cleaner air shelter for the public. |
| Very Unhealthy (201-300) | <p>Above recommendations, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly recommend everyone take steps to reduce exposure (stay inside and filter indoor air to keep it cleaner; go elsewhere for cleaner air if needed and possible). • Cancel outdoor public events and activities: Wildfire Smoke Guidance for Canceling Outdoor Events or Activities and Closing Schools. • If school is in session, discuss school closure with administrators if indoor air cannot be kept lower than PM_{2.5} 150.5 µg/m³ (AQI value of 201): Wildfire Smoke Guidance for Canceling Outdoor Events or Activities and Closing Schools. • Distribute NIOSH-approved particulate respirators, such as N95 masks, as available, for limited use outside. Include training material for proper fit and use. • For an extended duration of smoke, consider recommending that sensitive groups voluntarily relocate to an unimpacted area. |
| Hazardous (>300) | <p>Above recommendations, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For an extended duration of smoke, consider recommending that everyone voluntarily relocate to an unimpacted area. |