



JOINT PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 17, 2020

WILDFIRE SMOKE UPDATE FOR THE PUGET SOUND REGION

This is an alert about wildfire smoke from the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and the health departments of King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Current air pollution due to wildfire smoke may cause serious health problems.

Thursday morning update: Air quality throughout our jurisdiction of King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties is **UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS** to **UNHEALTHY** for everyone due to wildfire smoke.

Stay indoors with windows and doors closed as much as possible. We may see some improvement to the north near Puget Sound today as clean ocean air pushes through the strait. Further clearing will happen more broadly with the arrival of rain starting early tomorrow morning and continuing into Saturday. At this time, we don't expect more smoke through the middle of next week.

Conditions may change, we will update this forecast frequently until air quality improves.

Fire marshals in our four-county area of King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties have issued fire safety burn bans prohibiting outdoor burning including recreational fires.

Current air quality conditions are UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS to UNHEALTHY.

When air quality is **UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS**, people with heart or lung disease, older adults, children and teens should reduce exposure. When air quality is **UNHEALTHY**, everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.

Everyone should take precautions, especially infants, children, and people over 65, or those that are pregnant, have heart or lung diseases (such as asthma or COPD), respiratory infections, diabetes, stroke survivors, and those suffering from COVID-19:

- Stay at home when possible.
- Limit your activity outdoors, such as running, bicycling, physical labor, sports or hobbies.
- Close windows in your home, if possible, to keep the indoor air clean. If you have an air conditioner, use it in recirculation mode. Make sure your home ventilation system is maintained following manufacturer recommendations (e.g., replace filters regularly). Don't contribute to indoor air pollution. Use a [portable air cleaner](#) if available.
- Heat [can be dangerous](#) too. If it becomes unbearably hot, it's better to open the windows for a short period of time.
- Masks with the label "N95" or "N100" are the most effective type of mask that protects you from air pollution, but due to ongoing COVID-19 response we need to reserve those for health care and other frontline workers for now. While cloth face coverings are recommended to reduce the spread of COVID-19, they offer limited protection from air pollution and wildfire smoke and must be properly worn. Any mask or face covering should be used only as a last resort to protect against wildfire smoke. More information on COVID-19 mask do's and don'ts can be found [here](#).
- Check with your health care provider for more specific health questions and concerns. As always, seek medical attention if symptoms are serious.

For more information on ways to reduce your exposure to smoke, see the Washington Department of Health's [Smoke From Fire tips](#).

Air quality conditions may change quickly. Check the air quality forecast regularly at the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's [website](#).

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