

WILDFIRE SMOKE FACTSHEET

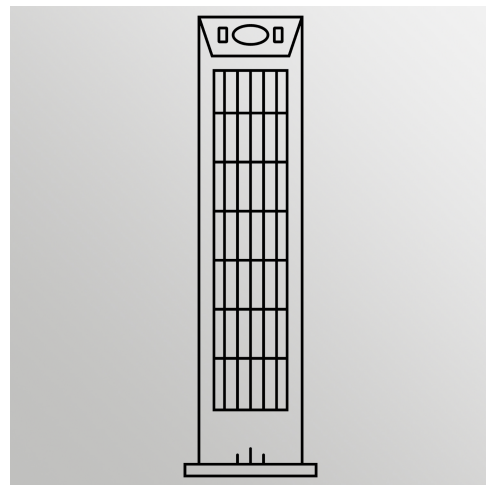


Reduce Your Smoke Exposure

When wildfires create smoky conditions, there are things you can do, indoors and out, to reduce your exposure to smoke. Reducing exposure is important for everyone's health — especially children, older adults, and people with heart or lung disease.

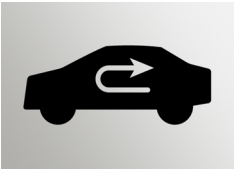
Reduce smoke exposure **indoors**

- **Stay inside** with the doors and windows closed. Whether you have a central air conditioning system or a room unit, use high efficiency filters to capture fine particles from smoke. Ask an air conditioning professional what type of high efficiency filter your air conditioner can accept.
- **Seek shelter elsewhere** if you do not have an air conditioner and it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed.
- **Do not add to indoor air pollution.** Do not burn candles or use gas, propane, wood-burning stoves, fireplaces, or aerosol sprays. Do not fry or broil meat, smoke tobacco products, or vacuum. All of these can increase air pollution indoors.
- **Use a portable air cleaner** to reduce indoor air pollution. Make sure it is sized for the room and that it does not make ozone, which is a harmful air pollutant. Portable air cleaners can be used along with efficient central air systems with efficient filters to maximize the reduction of indoor particles.
- **Create a “clean room”** in your home. Choose a room with no fireplace and as few windows and doors as possible, such as a bedroom. Use a portable air cleaner in the room.
- **Have a supply of N95 respirators** and learn how to use them. They are sold at many home improvement stores and online.
- Long-term smoke events usually have periods when the air is better. When air quality improves, even temporarily, **air out your home** to reduce indoor air pollution.



Use a portable air cleaner to reduce indoor air pollution

Reduce smoke exposure **outdoors**

- **Take it easier during smoky times** to reduce how much smoke you inhale. If it looks or smells smoky outside, avoid strenuous activities such as mowing the lawn or going for a run.
- **Know your air quality.** Smoke levels can change a lot during the day, so wait until air quality is better before you are active outdoors. Check your state or local air quality agency's website or airnow.gov for air quality forecasts and current air quality conditions. On AirNow, you can also sign up to get email notifications, download an air quality app, or check current fire conditions. In addition, some communities have visual range programs where you can assess smoke conditions by how far you can see.
- **Have enough food and medication** on hand to last several days so you don't have to go out for supplies. If you must go out, avoid the smokiest times of day.
- **Reduce smoke in your vehicle** by closing the windows and vents and running the air conditioner in recirculate mode. Slow down when you drive in smoky conditions. 
- **Do not rely on dust masks or bandanas** for protection from smoke. If you must be out in smoky conditions, an N95 respirator can protect you, if it fits snugly to your face and is worn properly.
- **Have a plan to evacuate.** Know how you will get alerts and health warnings, including air quality reports and public service announcements (PSAs). Public advisories can provide important information such as changing smoke conditions and evacuation notices. Know your evacuation routes, organize your important items ahead of time, and know where to go in case you have to evacuate.

Reduce your risk of health problems:

- Have enough medication and food (enough for more than 5 days) on hand.
- Follow your health care provider's advice about what to do if you have heart or lung disease.
- If you have asthma, follow your asthma management plan.
- If you feel sick, reduce your exposure to smoke and contact your health care provider.
- Pay attention to public service announcements, health advisories, and air quality advisories.

For more information:

- **Get air quality information:** Check your local news, the airnow.gov website, or your state air quality agency's website.
- **Learn about home air cleaners:** <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/guide-air-cleaners-home>
- **Find certified air cleaning devices:** <http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/indoor/aircleaners/certified.htm>
- **Learn how to use an N95 respirator mask:** http://www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/ResourcesAndLinks/Languages/Documents/English/ENG_ProtectLungsSmoke7208color.pdf
- **Fires — Current Conditions:** https://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=topics.smoke_wildfires
- **Learn more about wildfire smoke:** *Wildfire Smoke, A Guide for Public Health Officials:* https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/wildfire_may2016.pdf

