



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**NORTH CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT**

*“Caring For Our Communities”*

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## PSA

**Date:** September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
**To:** All Media  
**From:** Teri Thalhofer RN, BSN, Director  
North Central Public Health District  
**Subject:** **Wildfire Smoke Inhalation Prevention**

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Wildfire smoke from nearby fires is causing the air-quality in our region to remain in the unhealthy range. It's expected that this will continue for at least the next few days.

North Central Public Health District would like to remind residents to take precautions to avoid illness due to wildfire smoke inhalation.

Smoke from wildfires is a mixture of gases and fine particles from burning trees and other plant materials. Smoke can hurt your eyes, irritate your respiratory system, and worsen chronic heart and lung diseases.

Poor air quality conditions are a health threat and all residents should limit their exposure to smoke. Those with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly, and children, are advised to stay indoors when the air-quality is poor.

If you have to spend time outside when the air quality is hazardous, do not rely on paper or dust masks for protection. N95 masks must be properly fitted and properly worn to offer protection. See page 4 of the attachment for more info.

Please visit the DEQ Air Quality Index found at the link below. The DEQ site is updated hourly and is color-coded for easy to read information. Unfortunately, the only permanent monitor for our region is in The Dalles, with Gov. Camp, Madras and Hermiston being the next closest monitors. A link is also provided below with information on the 5-3-1 Visibility Index if there is not a monitor near you.

**Please take the following precautions to avoid breathing problems or other symptoms from smoke:**

1. Be aware of smoke concentrations in your area. See the links below for DEQ's Air Quality Index and Oregon Smoke blog.
2. Avoid outdoor exertion during such conditions. Avoid strenuous outdoor activity including sports practice, work and recreation.

3. Drink lots of water - staying hydrated can keep your airways moist which will help reduce symptoms of respiratory irritation such as scratchy throat, running nose and coughing.
4. Try to avoid driving in smoky areas. If you do need to drive in these areas, keep your windows rolled up and vents closed. If you need air conditioning, make sure you set your system on “re-circulate” to avoid bringing smoke into your car.
5. Avoid smoke by staying indoors, closing all windows and doors and use a filter in your heating/cooling system that removes very fine particulate matter.
6. People with concerns about health issues, including those suffering from asthma or other respiratory problems, should follow their breathing management plans; keep medications on hand, and contact healthcare providers if necessary.

**Please see the attached Wildfire Smoke & Your Health FAQ and visit the helpful links below for additional information:**

[DEQ’s Air Quality Index](#) for current air quality conditions

[DEQ’s 5-3-1 Visibility Index](#) for estimating smoke levels via visual observation

[Oregon Smoke blog](#) for the latest on fires and air quality across the state

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) fact sheet about the health threats from wildfire smoke

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) Respirator Factsheet

[OHA wildfires](#) webpage

(For more information, please contact North Central Public Health District at (541) 506-2600 or visit us on the web at [www.ncphd.org](http://www.ncphd.org) or our Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/NorthCentralPublicHealth/>.)

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