

Smoke from fires creating unhealthy conditions

The Kyburz Fire and other wildfires in the region are creating smoky conditions in some areas of El Dorado County, prompting the county Air Quality Management District and Health Services Department to issue an advisory.

Officials expect that El Dorado County may continue to be affected on an intermittent basis. Smoke conditions can vary a great deal in El Dorado County because of the terrain, wind direction and weather.

Fine particles in smoke can cause health issues, especially for children, older people or those with lung problems.

The following advise is applicable to people being affected by the Bison Fire in Douglas County, too.

Residents who see or smell smoke should consider taking precautions:

- Healthy people should delay strenuous exercise until the smoke has cleared.
- Children and older people should consider avoiding outdoor activity, especially prolonged outdoor exercise.
- People with health-related illnesses, particularly those with lung problems, should stay indoors.
- Windows and doors should stay closed as much as possible. Use the recycle or re-circulate mode on the air conditioner in your home and car.
- Avoid using non-HEPA paper face mask filters that do not filter extra fine particles.

- Keep airways moist by drinking lots of water.

Wildfire smoke can cause coughing, watery and itchy eyes, and difficulty breathing. People with questionable or severe symptoms should seek medical advice. When there is smoke in the air, the smoke visibility index can help people assess the air quality based on visibility in their area.

To assess visibility:

- Face away from the sun. Determine visibility range by looking for targets that are at known distances (miles).
- The visibility range is the distance at which high-contrast objects disappear.
- After determining visibility in miles, use the following Wildfire Smoke Visibility Index to assess air quality.

Visibility Range (miles)	Health Category	Precautions
10+	Good	None
5 – 10	Moderate	Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.
3 – 5	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Sensitive people should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.
1.5 – 3	Unhealthy	Sensitive people should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.

1 – 1.5	Very Unhealthy	Sensitive people should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.
< 1 miles	Hazardous	Sensitive people should remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Everyone else should avoid all physical activity outdoors.