

# Wildfire Preparedness

LEO Network

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# Upcoming fire season

- Little precipitation
- Some small fires already in February and March
- Warmer winter
- Potentially active wildfire season

# Predictive Services

## National Interagency Fire Center

- Above normal significant wildland fire potential April-June in Anchorage Bowl, Kenai Peninsula, and MatSu
- High likelihood of warmer than normal conditions across the entire state through spring and into summer.
  - Low snowpack in parts of southern Alaska (like last season)
  - Worst conditions around Anchorage Bowl and Kenai Peninsula (increasing fire activity 2-3 weeks earlier than normal)

[http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/monthly\\_seasonal\\_outlook.pdf](http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/monthly_seasonal_outlook.pdf)

# Is your community prepared?

- Monitor Air Quality Advisories
  - State air quality reports, news coverage, alerts
  - Become familiar with the Department of Environmental Conservation Air Quality Index
    - Issued with air quality report

# Sample AQI

Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	Meaning
Good	0-50	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate	51-100	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101-150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
Unhealthy	151-200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy	201-300	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.
Hazardous	> 300	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.

# Smoke Visibility and Air Quality Index

<b>AQI Category (AQI Values)</b>	<b>Visibility - Arid Conditions (miles)</b>	<b>PM2.5 or PM10 Levels (<math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math>) - 24 hour average</b>	<b>Cautionary Statements</b>
Good (0 to 50)	$\geq 11$	0-12	None
Moderate (51 to 100)	6-10	12.1-35.4	Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101 to 150)	3-5	35.5-55.4	People with heart or lung disease, the elderly and children should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.
Unhealthy (151 to 200)	1.5-2.75	55.5-150.4	People with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should avoid prolonged exertion; everyone else should limit prolonged exertion
Very Unhealthy (201 to 300)	1-1.25	150.5-250.4	People with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should avoid any outdoor activity; everyone else should avoid prolonged exertion
Hazardous	<1	>250.5-500	Everyone should avoid any outdoor exertion; people with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should remain indoors

# WATCH FOR SMOKE-RELATED SYMPTOMS AND ADDRESS THEM PROMPTLY

- Inability to breathe normally
- Chest discomfort or chest pain
- Wheezing and shortness of breath
- Coughing, scratchy throat, irritated sinuses
- Headaches
- Stinging eyes
- Runny nose

# Some people are more sensitive than others

- Elderly
- Children
- Persons with respiratory and cardiovascular diseases



# Medical preparedness

- Follow health care provider's advice about any special precautions and medicines
- Respiratory management plan
- Contact health care provider if symptoms develop and worsen
  - Discuss at what point it is appropriate to evacuate the area
- Local health care providers should make sure to have sufficient routine medications and smoke-related medical therapies

# If air quality is bad and you need to go outside

- Use a face mask
  - Not any face mask
  - Fit, beard
- Close vehicle windows



Mask Rating:  
R95, N95, P95  
R99, N99, P99  
R100, N100, P100

## Shelter in Place | Clean rooms/spaces at home

Interior room, with few windows and doors

- Keep windows and doors closed.
- If possible, set up a room air cleaner such as a HEPA filter
- Run an air conditioner if you have one
- Do not smoke or burn anything, such as candles or incense, anywhere in the house

# Community shelter options

If it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed, you have no home HEPA filter, or if you are very sensitive to smoke

- Seek shelter elsewhere in public facilities that are equipped with filtration/air purifying systems and air-conditioners
  - Clinic, senior center, school, or tribal office.
  - Work with the public health center or community health aide (CHAP) in your community to identify this facility.

# Avoid Exposure to Excessive Heat

- Drink plenty of fluids to hydrate and replace salts and minerals, wear appropriate clothing and sunscreen
- Warning signs of adverse heat symptoms include the following: an high body temperature (above 103°F); red, hot, and dry skin (with little or no sweating); heavy sweating; rapid, strong pulse; throbbing headache; dizziness; fainting; nausea; confusion.
- Drink cool nonalcoholic beverages, find a cool place with fan or air conditioning, if possible

# Wildfire Preparedness Plan

- Partner with and engage local, state, and federal decision makers and stakeholders
- Establish a community base map
  - Inhabited areas, forested areas, fuel sources
- Develop a community risk assessment
  - Fuel hazards, risk of wildfire occurrence, structures at risk, rate levels of risk
- Establish community priorities and recommendations
- Develop action plan and assessment strategy
- Communicate plan to community and key partners

# Resources

- **Community Wildfire Protection Plans**  
<http://forestry.alaska.gov/fire/cwpp/>
- **DHSS Rural Wildfire Factsheet**  
[http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/eph/Documents/wildfire/FAQ\\_FireSmokeRural.pdf](http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/eph/Documents/wildfire/FAQ_FireSmokeRural.pdf)
- **DEC Wildfire Smoke Air Quality Page**  
[https://dec.alaska.gov/air/smoke\\_qa.htm](https://dec.alaska.gov/air/smoke_qa.htm)

# Contact information

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