



MADERA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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****HEALTH ALERT****

County of Madera employees and residents may currently be exposed to smoke, ashes, and particulates due to the Rough Fire in the Sierra National Forest. The following information will help you reduce the risk of severe and life-threatening respiratory events.

Smoke levels are in the UNHEALTHY RANGE today and expected to remain there for several days. Everyone should remain indoors as much as possible.

Smoke can trigger life threatening respiratory events in people that are sensitive or who have underlying heart or lung conditions. Be on the lookout for anyone that exhibits signs of respiratory distress or heart attack. Anyone exhibiting any such signs should be provided immediate medical attention.

Recommended Precautions

- It is highly recommended to use a procedure (surgical) face mask to protect you from the smoke and ashes. Do not rely on paper dust masks found at hardware stores. These masks are not designed to block the particles generated by wildfire smoke.
- Keep windows and doors closed. If you have an air conditioner, run it, but make sure that the fresh air intake vent is closed and the filter is clean. If not, turn the system off.
- Evaporative cooling systems can also pull in air from the outside. Consider using a portable evaporative cooler within your house to avoid pulling air pollution into your house.
- Check on elderly friends and relatives.
- If these remedies are not sufficient, you may want to relocate to another location away from the smoke.

Healthy Individuals

When smoke levels are high, even healthy people may experience coughing, a scratchy throat, irritated sinuses, shortness of breath, chest pain, headaches, stinging eyes, and a runny nose. If you can see or smell smoke and ashes, you should limit outdoor physical activities and stay indoors as much as possible. Even in healthy people, this can cause temporary reductions in lung function and pulmonary inflammation.

People with Respiratory Conditions, Children and the Elderly

People with pre-existing respiratory conditions, children, elderly, and pregnant women should stay inside with the windows and doors closed. If it is hot outside, run an air conditioner if you have one, but keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside. If you do not have an air conditioner and it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed, seek shelter elsewhere. Watch for signs of heat exhaustion, including fatigue, nausea, headache, and vomiting, and contact your doctor immediately if these occur.

Follow your doctor's advice about medicines and about your respiratory management plan if you have asthma or another lung disease. Call your doctor if your symptoms worsen.

Categories of Health Alert Messages:

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

Health Information: Provides general health information which is not considered to be of emergent nature

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