



POLICY # 6105	Wildfire Smoke Policy		
EFFECTIVE DATE	6/22/2022	VERSION # 1	
DATE OF LAST REVISION	6/13/2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE	7/1/2027

APPLIES TO

Division	Districtwide
Sub-Division	n/a

VERSION	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE/SUPERSEDE	AUTHOR
1	6/13/2022	Initial	Scott Schumann

RATIONALE

This policy is to establish, implement, and maintain an effective Wildfire Smoke Policy in accordance with Cal/OSHA, CCR Title 8, Section 5141.1.

PROCEDURE

It applies to worksites where the current Air Quality Index (AQI) for airborne particulate matter (PM2.5) is 151 or greater and where it is reasonably anticipated employees could be exposed to wildfire smoke.

The following workplaces and operations are exempt from this policy:

- Enclosed buildings or structures where the air is filtered by a mechanical ventilation system
- Enclosed vehicles where the air is filtered by a cabin air filter
- The AQI for PM2.5 is below 151
- Employees who are exposed to a current AQI for PM2.5 of 151 or greater for a total of one hour or less during a shift
- Firefighters engaged in wildland firefighting

Although there are many hazardous chemicals in wildfire smoke, the main harmful pollutant for people who are not very close to the fire is "particulate matter," the tiny particles suspended in the air.

Particulate matter can irritate the lungs and cause persistent coughing, phlegm, wheezing, or difficulty breathing. Particulate matter can also cause more serious problems, such as reduced lung function, bronchitis, worsening of asthma, heart failure, and early death. Employees over 65 and people who already have heart and lung problems are the most likely to suffer from serious health effects. The smallest and usually the most harmful particulate matter is called PM2.5 because it has a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or smaller.

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Reporting

Employees who show signs of injury or illness due to wildfire smoke exposure are allowed to seek medical treatment without fear of reprisal. Employees should immediately report any injury or illness caused by wildfire smoke to their supervisor or Human Resources. At such time, employees will be directed to our designated medical facility.

Monitoring

Various agencies monitor and report the air quality at locations throughout California using the current AQI. The AQI is a measurement of how polluted the air is. An AQI over 100 is unhealthy for sensitive people, and an AQI over 150 is unhealthy for everyone. Although there are AQIs for several types of pollutants, the Cal/OSHA wildfire smoke regulation only uses the AQI for PM2.5.

The following sites may be used to monitor the AQI for PM2.5:

- www.AirNow.gov
- U.S. Forest Service: <https://tools.airfire.org/>
- Local air district: www.arb.ca.gov/capcoa/dismap.htm.
- PurpleAir: <https://www2.purpleair.com/>

The EPA website www.enviroflash.info can transmit daily and forecasted AQIs by text or email for particular cities or zip codes.

If employees may be exposed to wildfire smoke, supervisors shall monitor the current AQI applicable to the worksite(s) before and periodically during the shift. If the current AQI for PM2.5 is 151 or greater, the following procedures will be put into place:

- (1) Provide training to employees (occurs annually in Skills and Safety Trainings)
- (2) Lower employee exposures
- (3) Provide respirators and encourage their use

Employees may be notified by phone, text, email, or two-way radios when the AQI for PM2.5 is 151 or greater and informed on what protective measures should be taken.

Employees should inform their supervisor if they notice the air quality is getting worse or if they are suffering from any symptoms due to the air quality, without fear of reprisal.

In consultation with Park Supervisors, the Park Manager will determine if staff are to be sent home due to conditions and cascade this message through the Park Supervisors who will cascade message to U2s.

Protective Methods

Employees will be protected from PM2.5 when the current AQI for PM2.5 is 151 or greater.

Examples of protective methods may include, but are not limited to:

- Locating work in enclosed structures or vehicles where the air is filtered
- Changing procedures, such as moving workers to a place with a lower current AQI for PM2.5

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- Reducing work time in areas with unfiltered air
- Increasing rest time and frequency and providing a rest area with filtered air
- Reducing the physical intensity of the work to help lower the breathing and heart rates

If the exposure to employees cannot be reduced to less than 151 AQI for PM2.5, respirators will be provided for voluntary use, and employees will be encouraged to wear them. Respirators may also be use on a voluntary basis when the AQI for PM2.5 is less than 151. However, when the current AQI for PM2.5 is greater than 500, respirator use will be required. Contact your supervisor if you need additional respirators.

Respirators shall be used properly and kept clean. The following precautions shall be taken:

- (1) Respirators will be certified for protection against the specific air contaminants at the workplace. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. It will list what the respirator is designed for (particulates, for example).
Surgical masks or items worn over the nose and mouth such as scarves, T-shirts, and bandannas will not provide protection against wildfire smoke. An N95 filtering facepiece respirator is the minimum level of protection for wildfire smoke.
- (2) Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions on the respirator's use, maintenance, cleaning, and care, along with any warnings regarding the respirator's limitations. The manufacturer's instructions for medical evaluations, fit testing, and shaving should also be followed, although doing so is not required by Title 8, Section 5141.1 for voluntary use of filtering facepiece respirators.
- (3) Do not wear respirators in areas where the air contains contaminants for which the respirator is not designed. A respirator designed to filter particles will not protect employees against gases or vapors, and it will not supply oxygen.
- (4) Employees must keep track of their respirator, so they do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.
- (5) Employees who have a heart or lung problem should ask their doctor first before using a respirator.

To get the most protection from a respirator, there must be a tight seal around the face. A respirator will provide much less protection if facial hair interferes with the seal.

Employees are responsible for following the manufacturer's instruction on the proper way to don and doff the respirator. For employees who use an N95 or other filtering facepiece respirator mask that is made of filter material:

- (1) Place the mask over the nose and under the chin, with one strap placed below the ears and one strap above.

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- (2) Pinch the metal part (if there is one) of the respirator over the top of the nose so it fits securely.

For a respirator that relies on a tight seal to the face, check how well it seals to the face by following the manufacturer's instructions for user seal checks. Adjust the respirator if air leaks between the seal and the face. The more air leaks under the seal, the less protection the user receives.

Respirators and respirator filters shall be replaced if they are damaged, deformed, dirty, or difficult to breathe through. Filtering facepiece respirators are disposable respirators that cannot be cleaned or disinfected. A best practice is to replace filtering facepiece respirators at the beginning of each shift. If you have symptoms such as difficulty breathing, dizziness, or nausea, go to an area with cleaner air, take off the respirator, inform your supervisor and seek medical attention.

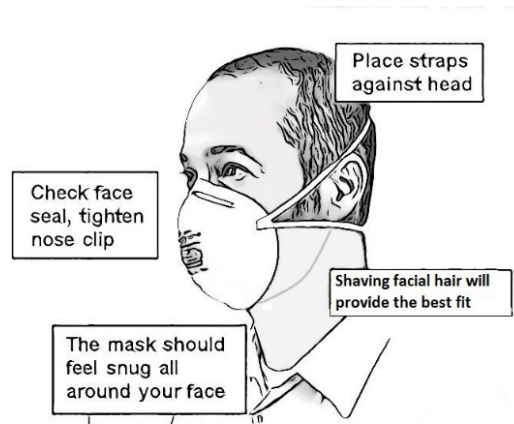
Training

Employees will be trained on the following topics:

- The health effects of wildfire smoke
- The right to obtain medical treatment without fear of reprisal
- How employees can obtain the current AQI for PM2.5
- The requirements in Title 8 Section 5141.1 about wildfire smoke
- The agency's two-way communication system
- The agency's methods to protect employees from wildfire smoke
- The importance, limitations, and benefits of using a respirator if exposed to wildfire smoke
- How to properly don, doff, use, and maintain the respirators provided by the employer

Summary of AQI -> Response Reference

AQI	District Response
0 - 150	1. Work continues as per usual
151- 300	1. Work may continue 2. Protective methods to be enacted
301 – 500	1. Work may continue with protective methods 2. N95 Masks use recommended 3. Staff likely to have option to leave work
501+	1. Work may continue with protective methods 2. Staff likely to have option to leave work 3. N95 Mask use required with fit testing



Authority: General Manager; Board of Directors; Cal/OSHA, CCR Title 8, Section 5141.1

Author (print and sign)

Date

Annabel Grimm
General Manager

Date

Approved by the Board of Directors on: **June 22, 2022**