

JOINT PUBLIC INFORMATION RELEASE LAKE COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT & AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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Smoke Impacting Air Quality in Lake County
Caution is Recommended

(Joint Public Information Release of the Health Department and AQMD)

The Clayton fire burning in the Lower Lake area has resulted in significantly degraded air quality in localized areas of Lake County. Current weather forecast is for variable light winds building to west, southwest winds later today. This wind pattern will help keep the heaviest smoke to the east of populated areas in Lake County, though smoke is expected to be noticeable in all other areas of the County.

A monitoring plan will be implemented, should the fire continue for multiple days. Current air quality in the County is generally considered good, though localized areas near the fire and downwind of the fire are estimated to be unhealthy for sensitive individuals to unhealthy for all. If conditions degrade, hazardous air quality is a potential health hazard for the fire fighters and anyone in the downwind plume of the fire. Please note that smoke is a visible indicator of poor air quality, but wildfires do release many other air contaminants that are not as visible as smoke particles.

Lake County Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Tait advises area residents to be cautious in resuming normal outdoor activities. "Variable weather conditions and ongoing fire activity may result in localized areas of reduced air quality, which could still pose health risks to people with underlying health conditions. Since we can't always predict when and where 'pockets' of poorer air quality may occur, it is prudent to be careful until conditions stabilize." Smokey conditions can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and air passages, which can be hazardous in young children, the elderly, individuals with heart conditions or chronic lung disease such as asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory conditions.

Individuals with asthma, bronchitis, emphysema and other lung or heart diseases should carefully adhere to their medical treatment plans and maintain at least a five-day supply of prescribed medications. They should limit outdoor activity and unnecessary physical exertion. Air conditioning that recirculates indoor air should be used, when available. Drinking plenty of water to avoid drying of the airways is recommended, unless restricted for medical reasons.

Dust masks are not protective against the most harmful pollutants caused by wildfire smoke that drifts to nearby areas. They are useful in filtering out the ash and larger particles that are encountered in burn areas. Air purifying respirators, such as N-95 filtering face pieces, may be effective in reducing harmful particulate matter, but also increase the work of breathing, can lead to physiologic stress, and are not recommended as a general protective measure.

Localized areas of unhealthy air, regional haze, and particulate from this fire are expected to continue throughout Lake County until the fire is out.