



LAKE COUNTY AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
2617 South Main Street
Lakeport, CA 95453
Phone (707) 263-7000
Fax (707) 263-0421

Douglas G. Gearhart
Air Pollution Control Officer
doug@lcaqmd.net

-PUBLIC INFORMATION RELEASE-

CONTACT: Dr. Karen Tait, Health Officer @ 263
-1090 Lake County Health Department

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Doug Gearhart, APCO @ 263-7000
Lake County Air Quality Management
District

MODERATE to UNHEALTHY AIR QUALITY ALERT for August 1, 2015 **Air Quality in Lake County May be Degraded from Smoke Intrusions** **Caution is Urged.**

August 1, 2015 @ 09:30am -- The Rocky fire burning near Lower Lake is resulting in smoke, haze, and degraded air quality through out Lake County. Weather forecasts indicate moderate to poor conditions which may result in regular smoke impacts for the Lake County air basin through the weekend.

The Lake County Quality Management District reports that Air Quality conditions currently are in the good to moderate ranges. The forecast for mid-day to afternoon is for Moderate to Unhealthy air quality where smoke is present. Ash fall throughout the County is possible again today.

Localized areas may experience intermittent particulate levels in the hazardous range, depending on the weather conditions. Currently higher elevation areas are more heavily impacted by smoke intrusion as the smoke starts to settle into the basin.

Conditions can change quickly from good to unhealthy, and this may be the pattern for the next few days. The air quality forecast for Lake County for the weekend is “moderate” to “unhealthy for sensitive individuals,” with localized higher concentration areas possible. All areas of Lake County may be significantly impacted should meteorological conditions worsen.

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.

The “moderate” to “unhealthy for sensitive individuals” air quality alert results from fine particulates in the smoke and the possibility of increased ground level ozone. These are generated when combustion products in the smoke combine with the high temperatures, sunlight, and humidity. Other chemical reactions reduce visibility by forming secondary particulates. Poor air quality, haze, and particulate from the ongoing wildfires are expected to continue throughout Lake County through the weekend.