SUMMARY GUIDANCE: Wildfire Smoke
Cancelling Outdoor Public Events and Activities

This is a summary of the Washington State Departments of Health and Ecology guidance for cancelling or moving outdoor events or activities when smoke may be a health threat. For more information: Guidance on cancelling events or activities, and closing schools - July 2019 (PDF).

Health effects from smoke
Symptoms of smoke exposure range from minor irritation such as burning eyes, runny nose and coughing, to life threatening.
Sensitive populations include people with heart and lung diseases (like asthma and COPD), people with respiratory infections, people with diabetes, stroke survivors, infants, children, pregnant women, and people over 65.

Factors to consider: cancelling outdoor activities and events
- Are there other weather factors to consider, like excessive heat or humidity, that would further increase risk of outdoor exposure?
- Is the visibility safe for driving?

Measuring wildfire smoke levels
The concentration of PM$_{2.5}$ – particles less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter – is the most useful measurement of smoke levels to protect health.
Ecology and local clean air agencies routinely monitor these levels outdoors. PM$_{2.5}$ concentrations are grouped in health hazard levels. Health and Ecology recommend making health decisions based on the Washington Air Quality Advisory (WAQA).

When outdoor forecasted 24-hour or NowCast PM$_{2.5}$ concentrations:
- Equal or exceed 80.5 μg/m$^3$ (WAQA value 201/AQI value 164) consider recommending cancelling outdoor public events and activities.
  - With the WAQA, this concentration is the lower level of the “very unhealthy” category.
  - With the AQI, this concentration is within the “unhealthy” category.
- Equal or exceed 150.5 μg/m$^3$ (WAQA value 301/AQI value 201) recommend cancelling outdoor public events and activities.
  - With the WAQA, this concentration is the lower level of the “hazardous” category.
  - With the AQI, this concentration is the lower level of the “very unhealthy” category.

For more information about steps to reduce exposures:
DOH Smoke From Fires
## Washington Air Quality Advisory (WAQA) Guidance for Public Health Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Advisory Category</th>
<th>Recommended Public Health Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td>If smoke incident is forecasted in your area, review the Washington Wildfire Response document for Severe Smoke Episodes and the Wildfire Smoke Guide for Public Health Officials. More health tips on the Department of Health Smoke From Fires website. More information about wildfire and air quality at WA Smoke.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good PM$_{2.5}$ 0 - 12.0</td>
<td><strong>Moderate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate PM$_{2.5}$ 12.1 - 20.4</td>
<td>Above recommendations, plus:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups</strong></td>
<td>Above recommendations, plus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhealthy PM$_{2.5}$ 20.5 – 35.4</td>
<td>Very Unhealthy PM$_{2.5}$ 80.5 – 150.4</td>
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<td><strong>Very Unhealthy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Unhealthy PM$_{2.5}$ 80.5 – 150.4</td>
<td><strong>Hazardous</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Hazardous PM$_{2.5}$ >150.4 | For people with disabilities, this document is available in other formats. Please call 1-800-525-0127 (TTY 711) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.