



air pollution control district
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY



For Immediate Release

July 8, 2024

Contacts:

Aeron Arlin Genet, APCD Executive Director and Air Pollution Control Officer: (805) 979-8282

Ryyn Schumacher, Santa Barbara County Public Health Public Information Officer, (805) 680-8819

Air Quality Conditions Worsen in Close Proximity to the Lake Fire Air Quality Alert in Place for Los Olivos – Air Quality Watch Continues Countywide

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, Calif. — The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department and the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) have upgraded the Air Quality Watch to an Alert for the region in closest proximity to the Lake Fire – currently Los Olivos region. Smoke and ash from the Lake Fire is affecting air quality, and conditions could change quickly to impact a larger region of the County.

All Santa Barbara County residents are encouraged to stay alert to local conditions by using two resources in particular:

- Check the EPA Fire & Smoke map: fire.airnow.gov.
 - This map shows data from our permanent monitoring stations, as well as from temporary monitors and low-cost sensors. Using multiple data sets, this map allows you to keep tabs on trends in the air quality conditions and see a bigger picture of information. It also displays a smoke plume to show what areas are being affected.
- Check readings available on APCD's website: www.ourair.org/todays-air-quality.
 - Our permanent monitoring stations are sophisticated devices that provide reliable readings from regional monitors located throughout the county.

We also encourage people to pay attention to conditions around them. Levels of smoke and particles, and areas affected, will vary. If you see or smell smoke in the air, be cautious and use common sense to protect your and your family's health. Everyone, especially people with heart or lung conditions, older adults, pregnant women, and children, should limit time spent outdoors and avoid outdoor exercise when high concentrations of smoke and particles are in the air.

When air quality reaches unhealthy levels (Air Quality Index at 151 or greater), and/or if you see or smell smoke, we recommend that everyone:

- Head indoors and remain indoors, as much as possible – the best protection against wildfire smoke is to stay indoors as much as possible;
- Avoid outdoor activity;
- Close all windows and doors that lead outside to prevent bringing additional smoke inside;

- Create a “clean air room” to keep indoor air quality safe. Turn on your High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) purifier if possible. For information on different ways to create a “clean air room,” click [here](#).
- Drink plenty of fluids to keep respiratory membranes moist; and,
- If you are an essential worker and must work outside during wildfire smoke conditions, the use of a properly fitted N-95 mask provides protection.

If you have symptoms that may be related to exposure to smoke and soot, contact your doctor. Symptoms include repeated coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, and nausea or unusual fatigue or lightheadedness.

Ash from the Lake Fire is also present throughout the County. County residents and landscapers are encouraged to not use leaf blowers if ash is present. Using leaf blowers stirs up ash and dust. Ash and dust are larger particles, but over time, they break down into smaller, more harmful particles that can lodge deep into the lungs and cause serious health effects; using leaf blowers contributes to the larger particles becoming smaller, hazardous particles.

If ash is present in your area, sweep gently with a broom before mopping; HEPA vacuums are also recommended.