New Mexico Health and Environment Departments issue smoke advisory impacting most of the state

Wildfire smoke poses additional potential health issues for people with COVID-19

June 19, 2020

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Department of Health and the New Mexico Environment Department today issue a smoke advisory for the Rio Grande Valley from Taos to Las Cruces and all surrounding communities from 9 p.m. tonight through noon tomorrow, June 19 due to smoke from multiple wildfires burning in Arizona and southwest New Mexico.

Smoke from wildfires may cause people to have more severe reactions if they are infected with COVID-19. If you have severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing or chest pain, call 911 or go to your nearest hospital. Learn more about how smoke affects those sick with COVID-19 at http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/smoke-faq.html

Arizona’s Mangum Fire (57,000 acres) near the Grand Canyon, Bush Fire (104,000 acres) near Phoenix, and Bringham Fire (15,000 acres) in the San Francisco Mountains are all expected to be very active now through overnight as relative humidity levels drop into the single digits.

In New Mexico, the Good and Tadpole fires (15,000 acres) in the Gila National Forest and the Dillon Fire in the San Mateo Mountains northwest of Truth or Consequences are expected to be active as well.

Since these impacts are expected to occur overnight, it is recommended that all residents - especially those with pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), interstitial lung disease (ILD) or lung cancer, heart disease, adults over age 65, young children, and pregnant women should take precautions to limit smoke exposure by closing windows before bedtime and turning off evaporative (swamp) coolers until the smoke lifts and visibility improves to about 5 miles.

As is the case with all wildfires, your eyes are your best tools to determine if it is safe to be outside. Use the 5-3-1 Method. If visibility is:

**Under 5 miles**, the air quality is unhealthy for young children, adults over age 65, pregnant women, and people with heart and/or lung disease, asthma or other respiratory illness*. Outdoor activity should be minimized.

**Around 3 miles**, young children, adults over age 65, pregnant women, and people with heart and/or lung disease, asthma or other respiratory illness should avoid all outdoor activities.
Around 1 mile, the air quality is unhealthy for everyone. People should remain indoors and avoid all outdoor activities including running errands. Unless an evacuation order has been issued, stay inside your home, indoor workplace, or in a safe shelter.

Additional tips for what to do during this and other smoke advisories are offered by the Department of Health at [https://nmtracking.org/environment/air/IndoorQuality.html](https://nmtracking.org/environment/air/IndoorQuality.html) and [https://nmtracking.org/environment/air/FireAndSmoke.html](https://nmtracking.org/environment/air/FireAndSmoke.html).

Given that heat is also a factor now through much of next week, New Mexicans may also need to take steps to avoid heat-related illnesses. NMDOH offers heat safety information tips at [https://nmtracking.org/health/heatstress/Heat.html](https://nmtracking.org/health/heatstress/Heat.html).

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