

Activity 2: Air Quality Event Press Conference

Working with the media is an important aspect of communicating air quality information to the public. In this activity, you will have the opportunity to practice giving a press conference on an air quality event that is occurring in your country.

Working in a group of 5-6 participants, prepare a 5-minute statement to the press on the hypothetical air quality event described below. Focus on the main points that your organization needs to communicate to the public and avoid using technical jargon. Select 1 member of your group to read the press statement; the other members of the group should be ready to answer questions from the journalists. When everyone is ready, participants will conduct the mock press conference for the journalists who are participating in the workshop and get feedback on their technique.

Air Quality Event Scenario:

It is Monday morning. Over the weekend, many fires began burning in agricultural areas of your country, as farmers prepared land for planting. Thick smoke from the fires is impacting a wide area, including the capital city. Many residents are being affected by the smoke, especially those in densely populated urban areas. The fires are expected to continue burning all week.

Yesterday, the PM_{2.5} monitor in the capital city measured a 24-hour average concentration of 67 µg/m³. Your country classifies this PM_{2.5} concentration as Code Red on the AQI scale, which is considered “dangerous” or “very bad” air quality.

Things to Consider for your Press Statement:

- What is PM_{2.5}? Why is it hazardous for human health?
- How will you communicate the current PM_{2.5} monitor measurement to the press (concentration value in µg/m³ or the AQI color code)?
- What are the expected impacts on public health? What groups are most vulnerable?
- What steps should citizens take to protect their health?
- Is there a website where the media and citizens can follow the air quality measurements for the next week?
- Are there any pictures or graphics you can provide to the media related to the impacts of the air quality event or your monitor measurements?