

Wildfire Smoke: A Guide for Public Health Officials

2019 Update

US EPA, along with federal and state partners, updated the *Wildfire Smoke: A Guide for Public Health Officials* (Guide) in August 2019. Last updated in May 2016, this Guide provides information about whose health is most affected by wildfire smoke, how to reduce exposure to smoke, what public health actions are recommended, and how to best communicate air quality to the public. The purpose of the Guide is to provide guidance to help communities respond to wildfires and to provide resources to help educate the public about actions they can take to protect their health.

Since 2016, EPA has partnered with the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) and Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) to work with state environmental and public health organizations to “test drive” the Guide and to use their experience to provide feedback on revising the Guide for future use. To achieve this, EPA, ECOS and ASTHOS worked with state environmental agencies, state public health agencies, and state and tribal air associations (Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies, AAPCA; National Association of Clean Air Agencies, NACAA; and the Tribal Air Association, TAA). The Guide is the product of a collaborative effort by scientists, air quality specialists and public health professionals from federal, state and local agencies, and it is widely used by state and local agencies in wildland fire situations.

In August 2019, the Guide was formally updated to incorporate the expanded scientific evidence base and include new recommendations. Specifically, the Guide presents recent research on how the potential health effects of wildfire smoke are similar to known effects from particulate matter (PM) found in urban settings. In addition, there are new recommendations for indoor air cleaners that emit little to no ozone and how to protect health during ash cleanups. The revised Guide also provides information on emerging technologies in air quality monitoring such as miniaturized PM_{2.5} sensors, mobile air quality monitoring systems, and data fusion products. In the future, EPA and federal partners will continue to use state feedback to update the *Wildfire Smoke: A Guide for Public Health Officials*.

2019 Deliverables

- Published update to the Wildfire Smoke Guide, August 2019
- Created a web course for health officials to understand the health effects of fine particle pollution from wildfire smoke titled *Wildfire Smoke and Your Patients’ Health Course*
- Developed additional factsheets for state and local agencies to use during wildfire events on the following topics: Protect Your Lungs from Wildfire Smoke or Ash; Protecting Children from Wildfire Smoke and Ash; Protect Your Pets from Wildfire Smoke; Protect Your Large Animals and Livestock from Wildfire Smoke

More information:

- 2019 Wildfire Smoke: A Guide for Public Health Officials: <https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/wildfire-smoke/wildfire-smoke-guide-revised-2019.pdf>
- Smoke-Ready Toolbox for Wildfires (includes additional factsheets): <https://epa.gov/smoke-ready-toolbox-wildfires>
- Wildfire Smoke and Your Patients’ Health Course: <https://www.epa.gov/wildfire-smoke-course>