



Air Pollution Control District
San Luis Obispo County

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Contact: Larry Allen, 805-781-5912
SLO County Air Pollution Control District

Dr. Penny Borenstein, 805-781-5500
SLO County Public Health Department

AIR QUALITY ALERT - SMOKE IMPACTING SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA, – The San Luis Obispo (SLO) County Air Pollution Control District and County Health Department informs individuals that air quality throughout San Luis Obispo County is being impacted by smoke from wildfires. Skies are hazy and fine particulate (PM_{2.5}) concentrations are higher than normal due to transported smoke from the fires. Changing winds and fire conditions make it difficult to predict which areas of the county may be most affected; both coastal and inland areas have been heavily impacted at different times and days. Thus, until the fires are put out, smoke will likely be intermittently present in our region. The Chimney Fire in San Luis Obispo County has been most active from about 3 pm to 4 am, so smoke impacts in affected areas may be greatest during this period.

If you smell smoke or see ash fall, County officials recommend you take precautions and use common sense to reduce the harmful health effects associated with smoke exposure. When smoke in the air is obvious, individuals should avoid strenuous outdoor activity and remain indoors as much as possible. These precautions are particularly important for people with existing respiratory illness and heart conditions and for the very young and the elderly as they are most vulnerable to the health effects of declining air quality.

Levels of particulates in the smoke may be high enough in some areas that even healthy people could be affected. If a cough, shortness of breath, wheezing, exhaustion, light-headedness, or chest pain occurs, outdoor activity should be stopped immediately and the affected person should seek medical attention.

To clean ash, please do the following: use a damp cloth and spray areas lightly with water, directing ash-filled water to ground areas, and away from the runoff system - do not use leaf blowers; take your vehicle to the car wash; wash toys that have been outside in the ash; and clean ash off pets. Due to its corrosive nature, avoid skin contact with the ash by wearing gloves and long-sleeved shirts. Please note, if you have existing heart or lung conditions, avoid doing ash clean-up yourself or anything else that stirs the particles back up into the air. In addition, do not allow children to play in the ash.

APCD and County officials will continue to closely monitor smoke impacts and air quality in San Luis Obispo County. By following the air quality index (AQI), the general public can also monitor real-time air quality throughout SLO County. The AQI focuses on health effects individuals may experience within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air. The current AQI is available via the APCD website: <http://www.slocleanair.org/air-quality/air-forecasting-map.php>. Sign up to receive the daily air quality forecast via email by subscribing online at enviroflash.info. ###