



Air Pollution Control District
San Luis Obispo County

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HEALTH ADVISORY – SMOKE FROM FIREWORKS EXPECTED TO IMPACT SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY BEFORE, ON & AFTER THE 4th OF JULY HOLIDAY

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA, – The San Luis Obispo (SLO) County Air Pollution Control District and Public Health Department are working in partnership to assess the air quality in order to identify any potential health impacts from smoke due to fireworks and to inform the community about safeguarding individual health. Air District & Public Health officials encourage everyone to have an enjoyable and safe July 4th holiday. Simultaneously, they want to remind central coast residents that fireworks increase levels of dangerous particulate matter and pose a health threat.

Firework smoke is largely composed of two types of particulate matter; coarse particulate (PM₁₀) and fine particulates (PM_{2.5}). Short-term exposure to fine particle pollution can pose health concerns, particularly for children, older adults, those with respiratory and heart conditions and pregnant women. This smoke can aggravate lung disease, cause asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and may also increase susceptibility to respiratory infections.

Particulates aren't the only pollutants linked to fireworks. From the sulfur and potassium in the gunpowder that powers them, to the heavy metals that provide the explosion of color, fireworks contain a potent blend of toxic compounds.

Following firework shows, expect skies to be hazy and fine particulate (PM_{2.5}) concentrations to be higher than normal. Changing winds make it difficult to predict which areas of the county may be most affected. However, smoke will likely be intermittently present in our region for at least one day following the 4th of July holiday. The APCD advises individuals that will be near neighborhood fireworks and large fireworks displays to take appropriate cautionary measures as individual health conditions dictate.

If you smell smoke:

Air District officials recommend that if you smell smoke, take precautions and use common sense to reduce your exposure to smoke. All adults and children should:

- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity
- Remain indoors as much as possible
- Close all windows and doors that lead outside to prevent bringing additional smoke inside
- Set any heating/air conditioning/ventilation systems to recirculate

Families should be aware that small children, older adults, those with existing heart and lung conditions and pregnant women may experience symptoms before others. If you experience a cough, shortness of breath, wheezing, exhaustion, light-headedness or chest pain, stop any outdoor activity immediately and seek medical attention. More information can be found at slocleanair.org/air-quality/wildfire.

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For updates:

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 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 and forecasted AQI is available via the APCD website: SLOCleanAir.org and you can also follow the SLO County APCD and Public Health Department Twitter feeds for the latest updates (@slocleanair and @SLOPublicHealth). You can also sign up for AirAware alerts right on your phone by visiting our website at SLOCleanAir.org. Lastly, you can also see real-time information from sensors in your community by visiting PurpleAir.com/map and entering your location.