



air pollution control district
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY



Air Pollution Control District
San Luis Obispo County



Prepare for Wildfire Smoke Impacts Check air quality, stay indoors, and create a clean room

(TRI-COUNTIES, Calif. — July 2, 2025) The Santa Barbara County, San Luis Obispo County, and Ventura County Air Pollution Control Districts (APCD) encourage residents to prepare for potential poor air quality caused by smoke, now that the area has entered peak wildfire season.

Smoke and ash from wildfires contain very small particles known as particulate matter that can travel hundreds of miles. These particles harm the lungs and heart and can cause coughing, wheezing, breathing difficulty, chest pain, nausea and, in severe instances, premature mortality. People with heart or lung disease, older adults, kids, and pregnant women are especially sensitive.

The best protection against wildfire smoke is to stay indoors as much as possible when smoke is present. Take these steps to stay safe:

1) Know local air quality conditions.

- For current air quality conditions and daily forecasts, visit and bookmark your air district's website.
 - San Luis Obispo County APCD — www.slocleanair.org/air-quality/air-quality-forecast
 - Santa Barbara County APCD — www.OurAir.org/todays-air-quality/
 - Ventura County APCD — www.vcapcd.org
- You can also view current conditions – including from PurpleAir sensors at the neighborhood level — on the AirNow Fire & Smoke map, available in English and Spanish: fire.airnow.gov.
- Sign up for Air Quality Alerts and notifications through your air district:
 - Santa Barbara County APCD — OurAir.org/subscribe
 - Available via text and/or email, in English and Spanish
 - San Luis Obispo County APCD — SLOCleanAir.org/air-quality-alerts
 - Ventura County APCD — vcapcd.org/#enews
 - Ventura County Farmworker Wildfire Smoke Text Alerts — Sign up by texting “SMOKE” for English or “HUMO” for Spanish, Mixteco and Zapoteco messages to 855-522-0034.

2) Smoke-proof your home.

- Create a clean air room by putting a HEPA (High-Efficiency Particulate Air) purifier in a room where you spend a lot of time, like a bedroom. These can reduce particulate matter indoors by 90%.

- They can be purchased at hardware stores or online retailers.
- Make sure that the device doesn't create ozone. Find a list of safe options at <https://www.arb.ca.gov/research/indoor/aircleaners/certified.htm>.
- Choose a make and model suited for your room size. HEPA purifiers for an average-sized bedroom cost about \$75.
- Replace the filter as directed in the owner's manual. Filters need to be replaced more frequently if used during a wildfire.
- Assembling a do-it-yourself version of an air purifier for a clean air room can be a more affordable option, with materials costing about \$40. This DIY version has been shown to reduce harmful particulate matter indoors similarly to a HEPA purifier:
 - Use tape to attach a 20-by-20-inch MERV 13 air filter — like what you would use for an HVAC system — to the **back** of a 20-by-20-inch box fan. Attaching to the back of the fan creates a better seal. Use a 2012 or newer fan due to safety features.
 - Check the direction of the air flow, which is marked on the side of the filter.
 - As needed, disassemble the fan to wipe away dirt.
 - Don't leave the device unattended.
 - Turn off the fan while sleeping.
 - Use the device modified in this way only as an air cleaner, not as a fan to cool your home.
- Check windows and doors to ensure the room is sealed tightly so smoke does not get pulled inside. Weatherize your home in preparation for wildfires by sealing leaky windows and doors.
- Upgrade the filter in your HVAC system to a filter rated MERV 13. Check and replace that filter regularly.
- Avoid activities that create smoke or pollution indoors, such as smoking, using your wood-burning fireplace, and burning incense or candles. Use your range hood while cooking.
- People with health conditions should talk to their doctor to develop a personal plan for wildfire smoke.

3) Find a Clean Air Center near you if you can't create a clean air room at home.

- Find the one closest to you at <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/cleanaircenters>.

###

Contacts:

Lyz Bantilan, Public Information Officer, Santa Barbara County APCD, (805) 979-8283

Meghan Field, Public Information Officer, San Luis Obispo County APCD, (805) 781-1003

Karin Grennan, Public Information Officer, Ventura County APCD, (805) 303-4002