

# School & Outdoor Event Air Quality Recommendations

## PROTECT STUDENT HEALTH DURING POOR AIR QUALITY

Air quality is an important consideration for schools in terms of student activities. This recommendation guide is for schools, coaches, and event coordinators regarding student exposure to fine particulate (smoke and dust) air pollution. Call 805-781-5912 for more info.



### Air Quality Conditions

First, check current air quality at [SLOCleanAir.org/air-quality/air-forecasting-map.php](http://SLOCleanAir.org/air-quality/air-forecasting-map.php)  
You can also view real-time local impacts at sensors near you by visiting [PurpleAir.com/map](http://PurpleAir.com/map)

	Visibility ≥ 11 miles	Visibility 6 - 10 miles	Visibility 3 - 5 miles	Visibility 1.5 - 2.75 miles	Visibility 1 - 1.25 miles	Visibility < 1 mile
Activity	<b>GOOD</b> (AQI: 0-50) LEVEL 1	<b>MODERATE</b> (AQI: 51-100) LEVEL 2	<b>UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS</b> (AQI: 101-150) LEVEL 3	<b>UNHEALTHY</b> (AQI: 151-200) LEVEL 4	<b>VERY UNHEALTHY</b> (AQI: 201-300) LEVEL 5	<b>HAZARDOUS</b> (AQI: 301-500) LEVEL 6
<b>Recess (15 min)</b>	No Restrictions	Allow students with asthma, respiratory infection, lung or heart disease to stay indoors.	Keep students with asthma, heart & lung conditions indoors.	Keep all students indoors and keep activity levels light.	Keep all students indoors and keep activity levels light.	Keep all students indoors and keep activity levels light.
<b>P.E. (1 hour)</b>	No restrictions, however very sensitive individuals may experience symptoms when AQI approaches 50 AQI.	Monitor students with asthma, heart & lung conditions. Increase rest periods or substitutions for these students as necessary.	Limit to light outdoor activities. Allow any student to stay indoors, if going outside may affect their health. Keep students with asthma, heart & lung conditions indoors.	Conduct P.E. indoors. Limit students to light indoor activities.	Keep all students indoors and keep activity levels light.	Keep all students indoors and keep activity levels light.
<b>Athletic Events &amp; Practices (2+ hours)</b>	No restrictions, however very sensitive individuals may experience symptoms when AQI approaches 50 AQI.	Monitor students with asthma, heart & lung conditions. Increase rest periods or substitutions for these students as necessary.	Consider moving the event indoors. If event is not cancelled, increase rest periods & substitutions per CIF* guidelines for extreme heat. Those with asthma, heart & lung conditions should not play outdoors.	Cancel the event or move the event to an area with "GOOD" air quality if this can be done without much transit through areas with poor air quality.  Follow CIF* guidelines for extreme heat.	Cancel the event or move the event to an area with "GOOD" air quality if this can be done without much transit through areas with poor air quality.  Follow CIF* guidelines for extreme heat.	Cancel the event or move the event to an area with "GOOD" air quality if this can be done without much transit through areas with poor air quality.  Follow CIF* guidelines for extreme heat.

\* California Interscholastic Federation

**NOTE:** Asthma Action Plans should be followed regardless of air quality for all levels of activity. When air quality is diminished, individuals should pay special attention to their Asthma Action Plan.



Air Pollution Control District  
San Luis Obispo County



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO  
HEALTH AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## USING THESE GUIDELINES:

School districts will need to monitor local air quality conditions using air quality tracking tools such as the SLO County APCD's current conditions table at [SLOCleanAir.org](http://SLOCleanAir.org) or the U.S. EPA's air quality index (AQI) available at [AirNow.gov](http://AirNow.gov).

School districts are welcome to consult with the SLO County APCD regarding outdoor air and the County Public Health Department regarding indoor air before making final determinations.

Please contact Meghan Field or Gary Arcemont at the SLO County APCD for more information at 805-781-5912.



## Additional Information & Resources

### About Face Masks / Respirators

- When air is unhealthy, the best option is to reduce physical activity and stay indoors with windows and doors closed. If indoor temperature is high, get to a location with clean filtered air such as a public library, shopping mall or other building with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system filtration.
- Masks have limitations. Surgical gauze masks provide no protection from smoke. N95 respirator masks are designed for professional use by trained adults and are not intended for children. Therefore, masks are not recommended for children by air quality districts or public health agencies.
- N95 masks require a perfect seal to be effective. If these masks are not fitted correctly, they will provide little, if any, protection and may actually exacerbate breathing difficulty for sensitive breathers or potentially cause deeper breathing, which draws particulates deeper into the lungs.
- Masks must be kept clean and replaced frequently to be effective. If a mask is used, please refer to the mask manufacturer's recommendations on cleaning and replacing intervals.

### Recommendations for Ensuring Cleaner Air at School

- Install and maintain HVAC air conditioning system with medium or high-efficiency filtration. Install high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, if possible. See below for U.S. EPA recommendations for air filtration. [https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/smoke\\_fires/indoor-air-filtration-factsheet-508.pdf](https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/smoke_fires/indoor-air-filtration-factsheet-508.pdf)
- Install portable HEPA filters in classrooms, where possible. Approved filters: <https://www.arb.ca.gov/research/indoor/aircleaners/certified.htm>
- Be sure that portable filters are sized correctly for the room.
- Ensure doors and windows are sealed tightly. Minimize air movement in and out of the room.

### AIRAWARE TEXT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM:

Sign up to receive text alerts right to your phone when there are significant blowing dust or smoke impacts in our county. Visit [SLOCleanAir.org/air-quality-alerts.php](http://SLOCleanAir.org/air-quality-alerts.php)

