



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Summer Air Quality Concerns

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — With temperatures forecasted to rise over the next several days, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department and Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District remind residents that the summer brings air quality concerns including the potential for wildfires and the formation of smog. Wildfires, in Santa Barbara County or outside the region, can lead to increased levels of particulate matter. Hot weather, coupled with inversion layers that can trap pollution low to the ground, can contribute to elevated levels of ozone, commonly referred to as smog.

In preparation for hot weather and wildfire season, it is important to be aware of health impacts from exposure to smog and wildfire smoke. Both smog and wildfire smoke can cause negative health effects, especially in children, older adults, and those with heart and/or lung conditions. Symptoms include coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, nausea, and unusual fatigue or lightheadedness. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

To minimize exposure, take steps to keep indoor air as clean as possible.

- Don't vacuum, which stirs up particles.
- Don't burn candles or incense.
- Consider purchasing an air filtering device, which can help remove ash, soot, and dust:
 - Select a device with a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter.
 - Keep the device in one room that could serve as a "clean air room" — the packaging on most devices notes the suitable room size.

When wildfires coincide with high temperatures, take steps to keep your home cool and smoke-free:

- Leave windows and doors closed unless it is extremely hot outside.
- Run your air conditioner, if you have one, and keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean.
- If heat and smoke affect you while inside, find shelter elsewhere until conditions improve.

For air quality information, more tips for protecting health during periods of poor air quality, and ideas on how every person can help improve air quality, see www.OurAir.org.

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