



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Keeping Indoor Air As Clean As Possible During Wildfire Season

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department and Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District encourage residents to prepare to keep indoor air as clean as possible. The smoky and ashy conditions during wildfires, and the windy conditions after wildfires, pose health risks, especially for children, older adults, and people with heart or lung diseases.

If possible, designate a room in your home as a “clean air room” where you could spend time during wildfires if the poor air quality is affecting you. High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters — which can help remove ash, soot, and dust — are available to purchase in various makes and models and for various room sizes: <https://www.ourair.org/edu/information-on-indoor-air-cleaning-devices/>. These filters will not remove carbon monoxide or other gases that may be present in wildfire smoke; however, they remove particles that are very harmful to breathe. A less expensive option involves attaching a filter to a box fan: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kH5APw\\_SLUU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kH5APw_SLUU).

During periods of poor air quality, avoid vacuuming and burning candles or incense, and leave windows and doors closed unless it is extremely hot outside. If you have an air conditioner, run it with the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean. During periods when outdoor air is cleaner, take advantage of the opportunity to air out your home.

When smoke is heavy for a prolonged period of time, fine particles can build up indoors even though you may not be able to see them. If you are unable to keep your indoor air clean and the inside of your house cool when the temperatures are high — especially if you are sensitive to wildfire smoke — you should consider relocating temporarily.

Even after wildfires end, winds can stir up ash. Avoid using leaf blowers or doing any activities that will stir up particles into the air. Instead, sweep ash gently with a broom, and take cars to a car wash. Everyone should avoid skin contact with ash, and no one with heart or lung conditions should handle ash cleanup.

For more information on wildfire smoke and your health, visit [www.ourair.org/sbc/about-smoke-and-health/](http://www.ourair.org/sbc/about-smoke-and-health/). To sign up to receive air quality advisories, visit [www.ourair.org/subscribe/](http://www.ourair.org/subscribe/).

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