



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 22, 2016

Contact:

Dr. Takashi Wada, Public Health Director, (805) 681-5105

Mary Byrd, District Community Programs Supervisor, (805) 961-8833

**Air Quality Watch Still in Effect for Santa Barbara County
Smoke Impacting Air Quality; Falling Ash throughout the County**

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — Today, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department and the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District noted the Air Quality Watch for Santa Barbara County is still in effect.

Smoke from the Rey Fire and from other wildfires is affecting air quality throughout the county. While air quality at ground level has so far been good to moderate, this could change as winds change. Much of the county is experiencing falling ash. The fires are growing and are expected to continue to produce smoke and ash. Levels of smoke and particles in the air, and areas impacted will vary. See www.ourair.org/todays-air-quality/ for results from county air monitors.

If you see or smell smoke in the air, be cautious and use common sense to protect your health, and your family's health. Everyone, especially people with heart or lung disease (including asthma), older adults, and children, should limit time spent outdoors and avoid outdoor exercise when high concentrations of smoke and particles are in the air. If you have symptoms that may be related to exposure to smoke and soot, contact your health care provider. Symptoms include repeated coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, and nausea or unusual fatigue or lightheadedness.

Winds can stir up ash, and over time those particles may be broken into smaller particles and blown into the air. Residents are urged to avoid using leaf blowers or doing any activities that will stir ash and 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.

During hot weather, use your best judgment when it comes to keeping your home cool when there is smoke in your area. Keep windows and doors closed unless it is extremely hot. If you have an air conditioner, run it with the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean. If you have a whole house fan, turn it off unless it is extremely hot. If smoke is not present where you live, take the opportunity to air out your home.

For more information on smoke and our health, visit our www.OurAir.org and check [www.twitter.com/OurAirAdvisory](https://twitter.com/OurAirAdvisory). For recorded advisory updates, call (805) 961-8802.

###