



air pollution control district
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

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APCD Gives Hundreds of Free Air Purifiers to Guadalupe, Casmalia Residents
All Santa Barbara County residents encouraged to prepare for wildfire smoke

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, Calif. — Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) successfully distributed 505 air purifiers to residents of Guadalupe and Casmalia on Sunday, the first day of a two-day distribution event for APCD’s Clean Air Rooms Pilot Program. **The next distribution event is scheduled for Thursday, September 30 (3pm-6pm), with 151 devices remaining for distribution.** As with Sunday’s event, the air purifiers on Thursday will be available on a first-come, first-served basis, limited to one per household with proof of address for Guadalupe or Casmalia. APCD partnered with the Guadalupe Dunes Center to host the distribution events.

“It was fantastic to see the community enthusiasm for this Air Pollution Control District pilot program,” said County Supervisor Joan Hartmann, whose District includes Guadalupe and Casmalia and who serves as the Vice-Chair on the APCD Board of Directors. “Wildfire smoke poses a significant health threat, and with wildfire season becoming more year-round, it is so important for all of us to have tools to protect ourselves. Air purifiers are an excellent tool.”

“Guadalupe residents are having an opportunity to obtain a valuable tool to help our community in addressing the poor air quality we have experienced as a result of California fires, as well as other negative impacts on the air we breathe. Through the efforts and resources of the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, local Guadalupe residents are obtaining free air purifiers for those requiring air filtration systems to help breathe a better quality of air in their homes,” said Guadalupe Mayor, Ariston Julian, who also serves on the APCD Board of Directors. “I encourage all families and residents, if they did not participate on Sunday, to take advantage of the second distribution of free air purifiers on Thursday with the goal of improving the health of residents.”

Smoke and ash from wildfires contain very small particles known as particulate matter. These particles affect our respiratory and cardiovascular systems, and people with heart or lung disease, seniors, kids, and pregnant women are especially sensitive to smoke. In recent years, wildfire season has grown longer and more intense, and associated smoke impacts have been more sustained and no longer limited to the region where the wildfire occurs. As a result, short-term levels of particulate matter have increased across the Western United States, with smoke from 2020 wildfires reaching 96 percent of Californians¹. Wildfires burning hundreds of miles away from Santa Barbara County in August-October 2020 caused significant impacts to our local air quality conditions.

¹ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-01-13/wildfire-smoke-fine-particle-pollution-western-us-study>



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The best protection is to stay indoors as much as possible when smoke is present, which emphasizes the importance of keeping indoor air clean. In a well-sealed indoor environment (with windows and doors closed and sealed tightly), high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) devices can reduce particulate matter indoors by more than 90 percent. Use of a HEPA device to create a “clean air room” – ideally, in a room where you spend a lot of time, like a bedroom – would ensure that the home has a dedicated space with safe indoor air quality during smoke events.

APCD’s Clean Air Rooms Pilot Program was unanimously approved by APCD’s Board of Directors at the June 17 meeting. The Board authorized APCD to spend \$100,000 to purchase the air purifiers as part of this program, with funds coming from a combination of APCD’s Clean Air Fund (composed of excess Notice of Violation revenues) and operational reserves. APCD’s goal with this pilot program was to purchase as many HEPA purifiers as possible with limited funds, and to provide the units to select Santa Barbara County residents in traditionally underserved areas home to many outdoor workers, who often endure wildfire smoke while working. APCD used a State-created mapping tool that analyzes environmental, health, and socioeconomic data to determine that the communities of Guadalupe and Casmalia would benefit from this pilot program.

APCD was fortunate to partner with many community members and local nonprofit and government entities to promote this event, including the Guadalupe Dunes Center, which generously offered to store the devices and host the distribution days. Together, partners promoted this program to eligible participants in Guadalupe and Casmalia and shared information about the benefits of air purifiers and how to check air quality conditions to know when to use them.

“We are so excited to see the popularity and community support for this program,” said Aeron Arlin Genet, APCD Director. “If you weren’t able to participate in this pilot program, we strongly encourage you to consider other ways to keep your home protected against wildfire smoke.”

Resources & Information about HEPA Devices & “Clean Air Rooms”

These devices can be purchased at local stores or online retailers, and come in various makes and models, suitable for different room sizes. A HEPA device for a small bedroom typically costs approximately \$75-\$100.

If you are considering purchasing a HEPA purifier, here are some features to look for in a device:

- Certified by California Air Resources Board for sale in the State of California:
<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/list-carb-certified-air-cleaning-devices>
- HEPA-rated
- Energy-Star-rated
- A light indicator for filter replacement
- Effective for the size of the room where you intend to use the device
- Quiet operation—approximately 45 decibels or less

APCD has a [webpage](#) dedicated to information about setting up your own “clean air room,” with infographics that focus on 1) how to choose and use an air purifier; 2) how to create a do-it-yourself



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(DIY) air filtration device that works similarly at a lesser cost; and 3) how to minimize common sources of indoor air pollution during wildfire smoke events.

APCD provides many resources on its website for checking and understanding Santa Barbara County air quality conditions. Visit our website to see a rolling 24 hours' worth of air quality readings for every monitoring station in the county, as well as daily forecasts and more: www.OurAir.org/todays-air-quality.

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