



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
 300 N. San Antonio Road • Santa Barbara, CA 93110
 (805) 681-5102 • FAX (805) 681-5191
www.countyofsb.org

PRESS RELEASE
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News Media Contact:

Susan Klein-Rothschild, MSW
 Deputy Director
 (805) 681-5435
 (805) 896-1057 (cell)
sklein@sbcphd.org

**WHAT ARE THE AIR QUALITY INDEX LEVELS AND
 WHAT DO THEY MEAN TO YOUR HEALTH?**

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) -- According to Dr. Charity Dean, Health Officer at the Santa Barbara Public Health Department the air quality index shows unhealthy air quality in Santa Barbara County and air quality continues to worsen. Santa Barbara’s air monitoring station has recorded “hazardous” levels, the Goleta station has recorded “very unhealthy” levels and the Lompoc station has recorded “unhealthy” levels. With the Thomas Fire continuing to burn it is anticipated the county will have continued concerns about air quality over the course of the next week throughout the county.

Based on reports from the Air Pollution Control District and in consultation with Dr. Dean, the following is the current status (12 noon) of the general air quality and corresponding recommendations.

Location	General Air Quality
Santa Barbara	Hazardous
Santa Maria	Good
Lompoc H St	Unhealthy
Goleta	Very Unhealthy
El Capitan	Moderate
Las Flores Cyn	Moderate
VAFB	Moderate
Carpinteria	Hazardous
Santa Ynez	Good

Please note that an excellent source for up-to-date air quality is <https://www.ourair.org/todays-air-quality/>

The Air Quality Index is an objective measurement of ozone (smog), particulate matter 10 microns and smaller (wildfires), and particulate matter 2.5 microns and smaller (wildfires).

The following report from the Air Pollution Control District is updated regularly and available on their website: <https://www.ourair.org/todays-air-quality/>. This chart is from 12/7/2017 at 0900.

Stations Monitoring Ozone and Particulates			
Location	Ozone	PM10	PM2.5
Santa Barbara*	Good (6)	Unhealthy (176)	Hazardous (303)
Santa Maria*	Good (18)	Good (20)	Good (20)
Lompoc H St	Good (2)	Moderate (68)	Unhealthy (153)
Goleta	Good (1)	Unhealthy (151)	Very Unhealthy (236)
El Capitan	Good (22)	Moderate (90)	
Las Flores Cyn	Good (31)	Moderate (90)	
VAFB	Good (35)	Moderate (70)	
Carpinteria	Good (19)		
Lompoc HS and P	Good (37)		
Nojoqui	Good (28)		
Paradise Rd	Good (27)		
Santa Ynez	Good (18)		

The higher the number, the more air pollution we are breathing. An AQI of 100 corresponds to the federal health standard for that pollutant. The AQI numbers and corresponding ratings are shown for the current hour, and are updated hourly.

“Hazardous”

- This is the most severe air quality rating and is an emergency condition. Even healthy individuals are likely to experience symptoms, and they could be severe and require medical attention.
- Fine particulate matter (less than 10 microns in diameter) can penetrate deep into the lungs making oxygen exchange difficult, damaging the lungs, and leading to more serious heart and lung effects for all individuals. This is true for both short term and long term exposure.
- All individuals should avoid outdoor activity
 - If outdoor activity is necessary, consider wearing an N95 mask. This filters particulate matter. However, the N95 mask can also feel “smothering” and actually make it harder to breathe, so the decision not to wear one is reasonable.
 - Recommend individuals follow their own preference on wearing N95 mask if they must work outdoors
- Those with underlying health conditions should leave the area
- Anticipate high utilization of emergency rooms and clinics for acute asthma exacerbations, heart attacks, heart palpitations, COPD exacerbations, and other health events. Anticipate elevated number of individuals admitted to the hospital for acute treatment.

“Very Unhealthy”

- Healthy individuals may experience symptoms such as
 - Shortness of breath, coughing
 - Irritation to the nose, throat, lungs

- Fatigue
- Heart palpitations
- Those with underlying health conditions should leave the area if they are able. If they experience health effects, they are more likely to be severe and require medical attention.

“Unhealthy”

- Healthy individuals may begin to experience health effects
- Those with underlying conditions are more likely to experience health effects, and they are more likely to be serious and require medication or seeing a provider. It would be reasonable for them to consider leaving the area. If they stay, they should avoid outdoor activity or strenuous activity.

“Moderate”

- Air quality is considered acceptable
- Healthy individuals unlikely to experience health effects
- A small number of individuals with underlying conditions may experience health effects (acute exacerbation)

“Good”

- Safe for all individuals

For more information please contact the PHD at 805-896-1057