



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

May 10, 2024

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ALTSA: ALF #2024-016
ALTSA: CCRSS #2024-016
ALTSA: ESF #2024-017
ALTSA: ICF/IID #2024-012
ALTSA: NH #2024-022

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CONSIDERATIONS FOR WILDFIRE SMOKE

Dear Administrator/Provider/Superintendent:

With the summer season approaching, now is the time to prepare to address the upcoming wildfire season. One of those hazards is wildfire smoke.

Older adults are more sensitive to the adverse effects of wildfire smoke, with a higher rate of lung and heart diseases compared to younger groups. Wildfire smoke exposure is associated with increased rates of emergency department visits for cardiovascular disease outcomes, including ischemic heart disease, dysrhythmia, heart failure, pulmonary embolism, and stroke.

As the wildfire season approaches, the Department of Social and Health Services recommends you take the following actions to prepare facilities:

Monitor Air Quality

- For current air quality conditions see www.airnow.gov and <https://enviwa.ecology.wa.gov/home/map>. Sign up for alerts.
- Consider the purchase of an internal air quality monitor.
- Follow recommendations based on the risk level for your residents.

Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies

- Maintain supply of N95 respirators for residents and employees.
- Check seals around doors and windows.
- Use highest performance air filters available.
- Consider purchasing portable air cleaners.
- Buy supplies before summer and items are out of stock.

Manage Indoor Air Quality

- Keep windows and doors closed.
- Close fireplace dampers.
- Turn off ventilation that pulls in outside air.
- Upgrade air filters.
- Set central fans to “circulate.”
- Use HEPA filtered vacuum cleaners.

Reduce Indoor Sources of Air Pollutants

Limit or eliminate the following sources of indoor pollution including:

- Smoking/vaping
- Gas/propane and wood stoves
- Furnaces not vented to the outside
- Frying or broiling foods
- Burning candles or incense
- Cleaning methods that recirculate particles (dusting, vacuum without HEPA filter).

Limit Outdoor Activities for Residents

- Limit resident's time outside to only necessary tasks when air quality reaches "Moderate" or higher levels.

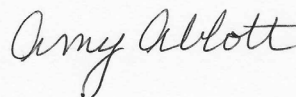
References and Further Information

- Preparing for Wildfire and Extreme Heat in LTC Settings: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/AL TSA/rcs/documents/Extreme%20Heat%20and%20Wildfire%20Prep.pdf>
- Wildfire Smoke: Considerations for California's Public Health Officials: https://www.cahfdisasterprep.com/files/ugd/39c143_8511c2b7d2124769b9862f8c79c6c73a.pdf
- US Air Quality Index: <https://www.airnow.gov/>
- Washington Air Quality Guide for Particle Pollution: <https://enviwa.ecology.wa.gov/Documents/WhatIsAQI.pdf>
- Washington's Air Monitoring Network: <https://enviwa.ecology.wa.gov/home/map>
- EPA: Which Populations Experience Greater Risks of Adverse Health Effects Resulting from Wildfire Smoke Exposure? <https://www.epa.gov/wildfire-smoke-course/which-populations-experience-greater-risks-adverse-health-effects-resulting#:~:text=Older%20adults.&text=Older%20adults%20are%20at%20increased,defense%20mechanisms%2C%20decline%20with%20age.>

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. Please see the documents on the [Residential Care Services Internet page](#) for specific strategies that you may implement into your emergency plans. If you have any questions, please contact your local RCS Field Manager.

If you have any questions, please contact Richard Freed, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Richard.Freed@dshs.wa.gov, 360-819-7001.

Sincerely,



Amy Abbott, Director
Residential Care Services

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