

FACT SHEET: NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING FOR THE EPA RECONSIDERATION OF THE NATIONAL AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS FOR PARTICULATE MATTER

WILDLAND FIRE, AIR QUALITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Wildland fires – including both wildfires and prescribed fires – account for over 30 percent of the nation’s primary emissions of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). EPA recognizes the increasing challenges and human health impacts that wildland fire and smoke pose in communities all around the country. EPA works closely with other federal agencies, state and local health departments, tribal nations, and other partners to provide information, tools, and resources to support communities in preparing for, responding to, and avoiding health impacts from wildland fire and smoke. In addition, EPA supports efforts by agencies across the federal government – including the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, as well as interagency forums such as the Wildland Fire Leadership Council – to implement and further develop strategies to reduce wildfire risk, and to help communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfires.

- EPA is committed to helping communities and our federal, state, local, and tribal partners to manage the health impacts of smoke from wildland fires. EPA works with the U.S. Forest Service to provide the public with near real-time data on wildfire smoke and air quality through the [AirNow Fire and Smoke Map](#); jointly maintain a [Smoke-Ready Toolbox](#) to provide communities, public health agencies, and other partners with information on how to reduce the health impacts of smoke from wildland fires; and provides [technical assistance to help communities](#) plan and prepare for smoke impacts. EPA will continue its longstanding participation in the U.S. Forest Service led [Interagency Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program](#) which provides operational smoke outlooks to help communities respond to smoke from large wildfires.
- EPA will also continue to support states in managing the impacts of wildland fire and smoke on attainment of the national ambient air quality standards for PM. The Clean Air Act and the Exceptional Events Rule provide a framework for addressing air quality data impacted by exceptional events in the context of certain regulatory decisions, including designations regarding which areas have attained the NAAQS. Both the Exceptional Events Rule and the 2016 PM_{2.5} State Implementation Plan Requirements Rule address fire-related emissions, including emissions from wildfires and prescribed fires on wildland. EPA has also issued detailed [guidance](#) on how states can seek to exclude data influenced by such events under the Exceptional Events Rule.
- More information on exceptional events demonstration submission deadlines can be found in Table 2 to [40 CFR section 50.14\(c\)\(2\)\(vi\)](#) – “Schedule for Initial Notification and Demonstration Submission for Data Influenced by Exceptional Events for Use in Initial Area Designations.”
- In addition, EPA acknowledges that federal, state and Tribal agency partners, as well as other stakeholders, view the use of prescribed fire as an important tool for reducing wildfire risk and the severity of wildfires and wildfire smoke. EPA guidance issued pursuant to the Exceptional Events Rule provides information regarding air quality impacts associated with prescribed fire on wildland, approaches to mitigate the smoke impacts of such prescribed fires, and procedures for seeking the exclusion of air quality data that is influenced by prescribed fire on wildland. EPA supports the use of these Exceptional Events Rule provisions by state and Tribal air agencies, when needed.

- Going forward, EPA is committed to partnering with federal land managers and working with states, Tribes, air quality management districts, and other stakeholders to provide the necessary tools and resources to engage in responsible wildfire [risk reduction](#) activities while ensuring attainment and maintenance of air quality standards to protect public health and welfare under the Clean Air Act. EPA intends to engage through opportunities such as the Wildland Fire Leadership Council to enhance communications and understanding about air quality impacts from smoke generally and on the particulate matter air quality standards, among federal agencies and other key stakeholders. EPA is also continuing to review its existing Exceptional Events wildland fire-related tools and information to identify opportunities to clarify or otherwise improve access to information and resources.