

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Name: [Insert Office of the Mayor or head of Health Department, Land Management Agency, or Air Pollution Control District, etc.]

Phone: [Insert Phone Number]

Email: [Insert Email Address]

Date: [Insert Date]

### Community Advisory: Protecting Your Health from Wildfire Smoke

[Insert location] –Wildfire smoke has traveled from [provide location/region] to our community. Although the fires are far away, smoke can still affect our air quality and health. It's important to take proactive steps to protect ourselves and our families.

#### Understanding the Impact

Wildfire smoke can carry tiny particles for long distances that may irritate your lungs and eyes, potentially leading to coughing, wheezing, and difficulty breathing. This is particularly concerning for individuals with chronic diseases, young children, outdoor workers, and older adults. People with heart or lung diseases, such as asthma, are more likely to experience serious and life-threatening symptoms from poor air quality. You can learn about how smoke is impacting your neighborhood with the [AirNow Fire and Smoke Map](#).

#### Steps to Protect Your Health

Here are some simple and effective actions you can take to minimize the impact of smoke:

##### **Keep Indoors in Cleaner and Cooler Air:**

Stay inside in cleaner and cooler air as much as possible. If you have air conditioning, use it to keep cool and keep windows and doors closed, including overnight, to limit smoke from entering your home. If possible, install a high-efficiency filter (e.g., one rated MERV 13 or as high as your system can accommodate) and ensure your system's fan is set to "On" instead of "Auto." Check filters frequently and change them when they appear dirty. Close shades or blinds to keep the heat out during the day.

##### **Utilize Air Cleaners:**

Purchase a portable air cleaner to capture fine particles from smoke in your home. If you cannot, consider building a [Do-It-Yourself air cleaner](#) as a temporary alternative. Check filters frequently and change them when they appear dirty. If you are not able to

keep smoke out of your entire home, place your air cleaner in a designated “clean room” (a room with no fireplace and few windows and doors) and spend as much time as possible in that room.

**Limit Outdoor Activities and Travel:**

Reduce outdoor activities, particularly strenuous ones. If you need to be outside, try to limit the time spent outdoors, reduce activity levels, take breaks in cleaner air if possible, and consider wearing a particle-filtering respirator such as a NIOSH Approved® N95® respirator. If traveling in a car when smoke levels are high, you can reduce smoke exposure by setting the air conditioner to recirculate mode. If visibility due to smoke is low, turn on headlights and slow down. If you have heart or lung disease, asthma, or other chronic conditions, pay attention to how you feel and if symptoms of heart or lung disease worsen, consider contacting your health care professional.

**Stay Updated:**

Follow local news and weather updates for the latest information on air quality and safety recommendations. Stay informed about any changes in conditions and be prepared to take additional steps if necessary.

**Support Each Other:**

Check in on neighbors, especially those who may need extra assistance, like older adults or those with chronic health conditions, to ensure they are safe and informed. If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms and a worsening health condition, contact a healthcare provider immediately for medical advice.

**Be Smoke Ready**

While the smoke we’re experiencing is traveling from a distant fire, it can still be impactful to our daily lives and health. By taking the above precautions, we can protect ourselves and support each other through this challenge.

For more information about air quality and changing conditions, please visit [\[Insert Local Government Website\]](#) or contact [\[Insert Contact Information\]](#).

Thank you for your cooperation and interest in what you can do to protect your health during this smoke event.