

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 Number: [Insert Phone Number]

Email: [Insert Email Address]

Date: [Insert Date]

Community Advisory: Practice Smoke Safety during Nearby Prescribed Fire

[Insert location] – [insert local forest] firefighters plan to start a prescribed fire in [insert location] on [insert expected date and time]. Prescribed fires are intentionally ignited in a strategic manner to help sustain healthy forest ecosystems and reduce the risk of out-of-control fires and the severity of future wildfires.

Understanding Smoke Impacts

Prescribed fires are a vital tool for managing our land and reducing the risk of larger, uncontrolled wildfires. While these fires are carefully planned and executed by experts to be safe and effective, they can produce smoke that may affect air quality temporarily. Prescribed fire smoke can impact our health, especially for those with chronic diseases, young children, outdoor workers, and older adults. The tiny particles in smoke can irritate your lungs and eyes, leading to coughing, wheezing, and difficulty breathing. Nearby residents with respiratory or heart disease, older adults, and children are advised to stay indoors if they notice visible smoke, the smell of smoke, or unhealthy air quality. People with heart or lung diseases, such as asthma, are more likely to experience serious and life-threatening symptoms from poor air quality.

Smoke is expected to most heavily impact [insert predicted region/proximity to community]. It's important for us to take steps to protect the health of ourselves and our loved ones during these smoke events. You can learn more 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. 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:

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

Prescribed fires are a key part of our strategy to keep our community safer from larger wildfires. By taking these precautions, we can be “smoke ready” and support the important work being done to manage our land responsibly.

For more information and updates, please visit [\[Insert Local Government Website\]](#) or contact [\[Insert Contact Information\]](#).

Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to our community's safety and well-being.