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AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
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For Immediate Release

Public Health Officer and Air Quality Alert Issued
7-18-08
Release 23.0

For all areas of Mendocino County

(Ukiah) - Smoke accumulation from multiple wildland fires throughout Mendocino County and Northern California is heavy in parts of the County today. The Smoke is being generated by fires in Trinity County, particularly the fires in the Yolo-Bolly Wilderness area. Warming and winds are likely to reduce smoke levels later in the day, but smoke levels may increase in the evening hours.

Because of the increased pollutant levels and areas of poor air quality, the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District is issuing an Air Quality Alert for today, **Friday July 18th, through 9:00 a.m. Saturday, July 19th, 2008.**

The District is conducting continuous monitoring in Ukiah and monitoring in other locations using a portable monitor. Selected monitoring results from 7/18/08.

Site	Readings in mg/m3
Ukiah (12:00pm 7/18 reading)	0.048 "Moderate"
Covelo (7/18 AM)	0.089 "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups"
Howard Forest CDF (5 min average – 11:40am)	0.280 "Unhealthy (for all)"

Winds are expected to be out of the west to northwest for most of this week. Smoke will generally travel to the east or south from any fires; however terrain and local winds will also impact smoke dispersion.

It is advised that all residents stay indoors as much as possible when smoke is present. Close all doors and windows, and turn the air conditioner to recirculation mode. Ceiling fans and portable fans should be used, as well as a HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filter when available. The Public Health Officer is not recommending the use of masks. It is recommended that masks only be used if you can see heavy ash falling. Zero benefit is provided by masks that are not of N-95 quality or higher or properly fitted. For those with chronic lung problems, masks may actually exacerbate conditions.

In areas of heavy smoke individuals with emphysema, asthma and cardiovascular disease are recommended to move to a cleaner environment, if they have the option to do so, due to the unhealthy air quality. If leaving is not an option, they should limit outdoor activities. Anyone using daily bronchodilator inhalers, oxygen, or steroids should not be outside or attend school unless absolutely necessary. Nighttime conditions are generally worse, as are valleys such as Boonville, Willits and Ukiah. All patients with lung or cardiovascular disease should check and make sure they have 5-7 days of medication on hand.

In areas where visibility is less than one mile, it is strongly advised that all public athletic events, including practices, be cancelled.

Weather conditions continue to change. Areas that currently read in the “Good” to “Moderate” range may worsen at any time. Please use your personal judgment and “common sense” when evaluating your environment in relation to your outdoor activities.

Smoke may continue to be present in the inland valleys and near any fires. Conditions are may be worse during the evening hours into the early morning as the smoke settles into low lying valleys.

The Air Quality Management District also would like to remind the public that the countywide burn ban issued by the California Department of Forestry (Cal Fire) remains in effect; all outdoor burning is currently suspended.

Visibility Range	Health Category	Health Effects
10+ miles	Good	None
5-10 miles	Moderate	Usually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion
3-5 miles	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Sensitive people should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion
1.5 - 3 miles	Unhealthy	Sensitive people should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid heavy exertion.
.75 – 1.5 miles	Very Unhealthy	Very unhealthy sensitive people should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.
>.75 miles	Hazardous	Sensitive people should remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Everyone else should avoid all physical activity outdoors.