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**MENDOCINO COUNTY
AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

AIR QUALITY ALERT FOR MENDOCINO COUNTY

Saturday through Tuesday, September 12-15, 2020

September 11, 2020 4:00 p.m.: The nearby August Complex fire continues to produce significant dense smoke and is on record as the largest wildfire in California's history. Due to the active fires in northern California and stagnant meteorological conditions, expect widespread haze and smoke to continue for most of Mendocino County for the next few days. However, the extended forecast offers hope of some relief approaching early or the middle of next week with higher humidity and smoke dispersion. Currently smoke from the surrounding wildfires remains elevated over the county. However, due to fluctuating wind directions and a high pressure ridge over California, the smoke aloft may fall to the surface bringing "Very Unhealthy" to "Hazardous" air to the area. Currently air monitors show particulate matter concentrations in the "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" to "Unhealthy" range for most parts of the County and "Very Unhealthy" to "Hazardous" to Willits and its surrounding area. Inland communities may experience episodes of "Very Unhealthy" air quality.

Degraded air quality has now reached the coastal areas which may experience episodes of "Unhealthy" air. "Good" air quality could return by the middle of next week for the coast.

Meteorological conditions are forecast to remain more of the same. Expect smoke impacts to continue in Mendocino County. Extreme fire weather conditions with persistent high pressure may bring impacts of "Very Unhealthy" air and smoke accumulation to valley areas. Consecutive days of warm dry air have increased fire activities and fires popping back up. Therefore, while surrounding wildfires are active, expect unpredictable smoke impacts to air quality followed by multiple periods of some relief through the next few days.

Smoke in heavy concentrations can cause eye and throat irritation, coughing, and difficulty breathing. Even healthy adults can be affected by smoke. When air quality conditions are "Unhealthy", everyone should limit prolonged or heavy exertion activities outdoors. Cloth facial coverings that are used to slow the spread of COVID-19 offer little protection against wildfire smoke. They do not catch small harmful particles in smoke that can harm your health. Therefore, we recommend following these general precautions to protect your health during a smoke event:

- Minimize or stop outdoor activities, especially exercise.
- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed as much as possible.
- Do not run fans that bring smoky outdoor air inside – examples include swamp coolers, whole-house fans, and fresh air ventilation systems.
- Run your air-conditioner only if it does not bring smoke in from the outdoors. Change the standard air conditioner filter to a medium or high efficiency filter. If available, use the "re-circulate" or "recycle" setting on the unit.
- Consider creating a clean air room at home using a purchased or DIY HEPA air purifier. See CDC link provided below for more information.
- Do not smoke, fry food, or do other things that will create indoor air pollution.

If you have lung disease (including asthma) or heart disease, closely monitor your health and contact your doctor if you have symptoms that worsen.

Consider leaving the area until smoke conditions improve if you have repeated coughing, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, nausea, unusual fatigue, lightheadedness.

Mendocino County Air Quality Management District continuously monitors the air quality, reporting particulate matter and ozone concentrations hourly to our website: www.mendoair.org. In the sidebar on the right of our webpage (scroll down if using a mobile device), under “**Air Quality for Mendocino**”--**Click Here** for current conditions, forecast, and email alerts. For additional information, click on an air quality index range, or the colored tabs below the map.

For more air quality and smoke information visit: <https://fire.airnow.gov>

For information on wildfire smoke and COVID-19:

https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/covid-19/wildfire_smoke_covid-19.html

To sign up for air quality notifications visit: <http://www.enviroflash.info/signup.cfm>