



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Air Quality Update for San Luis Obispo County
Smoke not currently a health risk; County officials recommend common-sense precautions

San Luis Obispo – The Public Health Department and the Air Pollution Control District are working in partnership to assess air quality, to identify any potential health impacts and to inform the community about safeguarding individual health.

At this time in San Luis Obispo County, smoke is visible in the air from the Thomas Fire in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Currently, the smoke particles are largely contained in the upper atmosphere and are not a health risk.

This may change based on weather patterns, wind direction and the progress of the fire.

For updates:

Air Quality – For updates on air quality conditions from the APCD, check air quality reports and sign up for mobile alerts at www.slocleanair.org.

Public Health - For health updates from the Public Health Department, call the Public Health Information Line at 805-788-2903.

If you smell smoke:

County officials recommend that if you smell smoke, take precautions and use common sense to reduce your exposure to smoke. When it is obvious that smoke is in the air, all adults and children should:

- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity
- Remain indoors as much as possible
- Set any heating/air conditioning/ventilation systems to recirculate

If staying indoors does not provide relief, temporarily leaving the area and going to a location where the smoke impacts are not significant may provide relief.

These precautions are especially important for children, older adults, and people with existing respiratory illness and heart conditions, as they are particularly vulnerable to the health effects of poor

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air quality. Families with small children should be aware that even if adults in the household have no symptoms, children may experience symptoms due to their smaller body mass and developing lungs.

If smoke increases, healthy people could be affected as well.

If you experience a cough, shortness of breath, wheezing, exhaustion, light-headedness or chest pain, stop any outdoor activity immediately and seek medical attention.

Regarding N95 masks:

While N95 masks, also known as respirators, are being distributed in Santa Barbara County, such personal protection is not indicated for SLO County residents at this time based on air monitoring data collected hourly.

Health officials are closely following the situation and contingency plans are in place to distribute masks as needed. Officials will provide updates with details as the situation develops.

N95 masks provide the most protection only when fitted properly, based on use of a fit-test machine. These masks are designed for adults, though may fit a child if the child's face is comparable in size to that of a petite adult. Individuals with asthma or other medical conditions who are considering use of a mask may want to consult their doctors first, as the mask can reduce airflow.

Ongoing air quality monitoring:

The SLO County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) closely monitors local air quality during wildfire events. The APCD has nine permanent air monitoring stations located throughout the county measuring air quality and collecting data 24-hours per day, 7-days per week. In addition, during wildfires and large controlled burns, the APCD sets up temporary air monitoring sites to closely monitor those areas that may be most impacted.

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