Wildfire Smoke Protection

Risk & Safety TRAINING

Training

Supervisors must establish a means

of communicating worsening air

quality conditions to employees. If

the AQI becomes harmful, you will

be alerted in-person, via text, email,

website, radio, or other effective

method. Notify your supervisor if

you notice the air quality is

worsening, or if you're suffering

Know vour

Protections

Examples of protective controls the

Locate work in protected areas

where air is filtered (enclosed

Change procedures (i.e. move

workers to a place with lower

Reduce work time in areas with

Increase rest time and

frequency: provide rest area

Reduce the physical intensity of

work to help lower breathing

Contact your supervisor to access

the University control system at your

University may implement include:

structures or vehicles)

current AQI for PM2.5)

unfiltered air

with filtered air

and heart rates

symptoms due to the air quality.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The University has measures in place to inform you of, and protect you from, the dangers of inhaling wildfire smoke.

Read the information below, based on Cal/OSHA Appendix B to Title 8 <u>Section 5141.1</u>. The standard is applicable when the current Air Quality Index for fine particulate matter (PM2.5) is 151 or greater. It applies to employees who work outside or in non-filtered buildings and/or vehicles for more than one hour per shift.



Fine particulates suspended in air are the main harmful pollutant for people who are not very close to wildfires. Recognize symptoms from inhalation of particulate matter, which include lung irritation, persistent coughing, phlegm, wheezing, or difficulty breathing. More serious health effects include reduced lung function, bronchitis, worsening of asthma, heart failure, and early death. People who have existing heart and lung problems, or are over 65 years of age, are most likely to suffer serious health effects.



Obtain prompt Medical Treatment

The University provides medical treatment to employees who become ill or injured due to wildfire smoke exposure during work. Follow campus procedures to **obtain prompt medical treatment** without fear of reprisal.



Air Quality Index

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a measurement of pollution in air. Although there are AQIs for several pollutants, Title 8 section 5141.1 is based on the AQI for PM2.5. PM2.5 has a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or smaller and is considered the most harmful size of particulate matter.

Locate the AQI for your area at:

www.AirNow.gov https://tools.airfire.org www.arb.ca.gov/capcoa/dismap/htm www.enviroflash.info

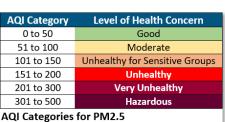
If you do not have access to the internet, **contact your supervisor** for the current AQI in your area.



Understand compliance Requirements

If you may be exposed to wildfire smoke and the AQI for PM2.5 is 151 or greater, you must be provided: a) the current AQI before and periodically during each shift, b) training, such as this fact sheet, c) work modifications to reduce your exposure, and d) respirators with encouragement and instruction on how to use them. **Consult with your supervisor** for questions about additional protections that may be available to you.

At AQI levels of 151 or greater for PM2.5, the University must take additional precautions to protect you from wildfire smoke.



worksite.



When the AQI level for PM2.5 is 151 or greater, the University will provide you with proper respirators for voluntary use. If the AQI level exceeds 500, use of a properly fit respirator is required for any critical outdoor work.

Importance & Benefits

The University will select respirators certified for protection against the specific air contaminants in your workplace. When properly selected and worn, respirators effectively reduce your exposure to wildfire smoke and protect your health. **Check your respirator** or respirator packaging for a label or statement of certification from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

An N-95 filtering facepiece respirator is the minimum level of protection for wildfire smoke.

For more information regarding **limitations** and how to properly put on, use, and maintain N-95 facepiece respirators and other masks made of filter material, visit <u>bit.ly/uc-wildfire</u>, see the handout attached, or scan the QR code below.

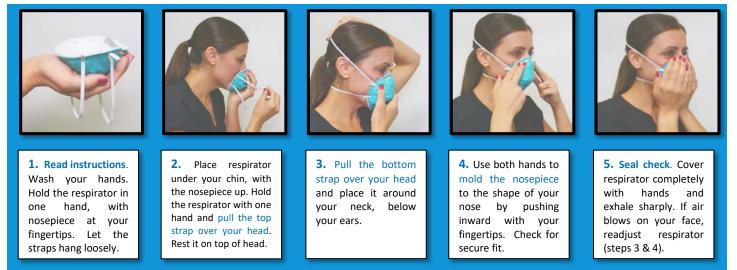


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Risk & Safety TRAINING University of California

N-95 Filtering facepiece respirators are air-purifying respirators certified by NIOSH to have filter efficiency levels of 95% or greater. N-95 respirators filter out airborne contaminants including dusts, fumes, mists, and microbial agents such as tuberculosis bacteria & flu virus. An N-95 filtering facepiece respirator is the minimum level of protection for wildfire smoke. Respirator use can be beneficial even when the AQI for PM2.5 is 150 or less.

How to Put on N-95 Respirators



Note: The proper way to put on a respirator depends on the type and model of the respirator. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions.

Proper Use & Maintenance

- Choose N-95 respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern.
- Read & follow instructions from the manufacturer.
 Check for a tight seal
- around the face every time you put the respirator on. The more air leaks under the seal, the less protection you receive.
- Keep track of your respirator as to not mistakenly use someone else's.
- Inspect the respirator prior to use; check for damage and contamination.
- Replace your respirator if it becomes damaged, deformed, dirty, or difficult to breathe through.
- Ask your doctor before using a respirator if you have a lung or heart problem.
- Go to an area with cleaner air, take off the respirator, and seek medical help, if you experience symptoms (i.e. difficulty breathing, dizziness, or nausea).
- Dispose of the respirator in the normal trash, unless it was used in a medical facility or research area with specific disposal procedures, or if there is evidence it may be contaminated.
- Store your respirator properly to protect it from damage, contamination, extreme temperatures, damaging chemicals, and crushing or deforming the facepiece.

- **DO NOT** use surgical masks or other items over your nose and mouth (i.e. scarves, T-shirts, bandannas). They will not provide protection against wildfire smoke.
- DO NOT wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which it is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or highly toxic materials.
- **DO NOT** attempt to reuse, clean, or disinfect disposable filtering facepiece respirators.
- **DO NOT** allow facial hair, hair, jewelry, glasses, clothing, or anything else to prevent proper placement or come between your face and the respirator.

Required Use

N-95 respirators may be **required** as personal protective equipment, depending on your job responsibilities. Regarding wildfire smoke, you must wear a respirator when the current AQI is greater than 500. For required use, you must obtain 1.) Medical Evaluation and clearance, 2.) Training on an annual basis, and 3.) Fit testing for proper fit (annually). To ensure adequate protection, do not wear respirator models and sizes for which you have not been fit-tested by EH&S.

Limitations

Review and follow instructions from the manufacturer on the respirator's use, maintenance, cleaning, care, and limitations. Also **follow instructions** from the manufacturer and University regarding medical evaluations, fit testing, and shaving.

N-95 respirators only filter out particulate contaminants. They do not protect you from chemical vapors/gases, oxygen deficient atmospheres, high risk exposures such as



those created by aerosol-generating procedures (i.e. bronchoscopy, autopsy) and asbestos handling. Facial hair reduces the effectiveness of N-95 respiratory protection, but shaving is not required for voluntary use. If you have facial hair, you may wear a loose-fitting powered air purifying respirator.



Mandatory Information for Employees Using Respirators when not Required Under the Standard Cal/OSHA Appendix D to Section 5144

Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Respirator use is encouraged, even when exposures are below the exposure limit, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker. Sometimes, workers may wear respirators to avoid exposures to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

As a reminder, you should do the following:

1. **Read and heed** all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirator's limitations.

2. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. It will tell you what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect you.

3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.

4. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

For more information regarding **limitations** and how to properly put on, use, and maintain N-95 facepiece respirators and other masks made of filter material, visit <u>bit.ly/ucN95</u> or scan the QR code below.

