

Protection from Wildfire Smoke

Procedure/Approach

Oregon OSHA adopted these rules to address worker exposure to unhealthy and hazardous levels of the primary air contaminant of concern in wildfire smoke, fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). While significant exposures to wildfire smoke can be unhealthy for anyone, workers with pre-existing health conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or heart disease are at increased risk of serious or fatal health effects when exposed to high levels of PM_{2.5} in wildfire smoke.

These procedures serve to protect SOCFC employees from the hazards of wildfire smoke by using Oregon's Air Quality Index app, a daily index of air quality that reports how clean the air is and provides information on potential health risks.

Oregon's index is based on three pollutants regulated by the federal Clean Air Act: ground level ozone, particle pollution and nitrogen dioxide. The highest of the AQI values for the individual pollutants becomes the AQI value for that day. For example, if values are 90 for ozone and 88 for nitrogen dioxide, the AQI reported would be 90 for the pollutant ozone on that day.

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Wildfire Smoke Exposure:

A. Symptoms:

- a. The symptoms of wildfire smoke exposure: (a) Eyes: burning sensations, redness, and tearing of the eyes caused by irritation and inflammation of the eyes that can temporarily impair one's vision; (b) Respiratory system: runny nose, sore throat, cough, difficulty breathing, sinus irritation, wheezing, shortness of breath; and (c) Fatigue, headache, irregular heartbeat, chest pain.

B. Sensitive Groups

- a. Individuals with pre-existing health conditions and those who are sensitive to air pollution are among those likely to experience health problems from exposure to wildfire smoke. Examples of sensitive groups include: people with lung disease such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), including bronchitis and emphysema, and those who smoke; people with respiratory infections, such as pneumonia, acute bronchitis, bronchiolitis, cold, flu, or those recovering from severe

respiratory illness; people with existing heart or circulatory problems, such as irregular heartbeat, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, angina, and those who have had a heart attack or stroke; children under 18 years old, and adults over age 65; pregnant women; people with diabetes; and people with other medical or health conditions which can be exacerbated by exposure to wildfire smoke as determined by a physician or other licensed healthcare provider.

C. Employee Rights

- a. It is each employee's right to report symptoms of wildfire smoke exposure to their supervisor and to obtain medical treatment for such workplace exposures without fear of retaliation.

D. Air Quality Index App

- a. Two apps called Oregon Air and Air Now can be obtained free of charge by going to the Apple App Store and searching for Oregon Air or Air Now. Oregon Air provides information on Air Quality throughout the state of Oregon, while Air Now will show the AQI of a specific zip code or address.

Communication of Wildfire Smoke

A. Management

- a. Safety Resource Manager will inform staff when the AQI will be above 100. Center staff and enrolled children do not participate in outdoor activities when the AQI is above 125. The Maintenance Supervisor informs maintenance staff when the AQI is above 101. When the AQI will be above 200, the maintenance team discontinues outdoor work.

B. Exposure Control

- a. When the AQI is between 100 and 125, center management will ensure that NIOSH approved N95 vented masks are offered to staff who will be supervising children outdoors. The communication will be provided verbally to classroom staff before the scheduled outdoor time. The Maintenance Supervisor will remind maintenance staff of the N95 vented masks available when the AQI is above 100 and will ensure masks are accessible on each maintenance vehicle. The wearing of an N95 mask is determined by the employee and is not required.

N95 Vented Masks

The following steps need to be followed prior to wearing an N95 mask:

- Place the N95 mask on your face.
- Put the ties or headband over your head and at the neck base.

- Compress the mask to ensure it seals the cheeks, face, and the bridge of your nose.
- Exhale gently to check the respirator's positive pressure seal. Adjust it if some air escapes.
- Inhale gently to check the respirator's negative pressure seal. Again readjust no air is drawn in towards the face.
- Remember to always check the manufacturer's specifications as you do the N95 mask fit test.
- Any staff member who may be sensitive to the AQI when its 101 up through 124 should wear an N95 mask.

Training and Recordkeeping:

A. New Employees

- a. All new employees will be informed of the Protection from Wildfire Smoke procedures during the New Employee Orientation.

B. Annual Training

- a. Annually, all returning employees will receive refresher training on Protection from Wildfire Smoke.

C. Training Records

- a. Annual training records will be kept for at least 1 year and must include the name of each employee trained, the date(s) of the training(s), and the name of the person(s) who conducted the training. These records are maintained by the Human Resources Department.