



Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services recommendations on limiting your exposure to smoke and protecting your health. (Adapted from CDC)

Pay attention to local air quality reports. Listen and watch for news or health warnings about smoke. Call 343-4899 for regular updates about the air quality in Anchorage. Also pay attention to public health messages about taking additional safety measures.

Refer to the Smoke Visibility Guide (see next page) to help determine the quality of the air and what precautions you should take to protect your health. When air quality data is unavailable, use the Smoke Visibility Guide to estimate air quality levels and potential health impacts.

If you are advised to stay indoors, keep indoor air as clean as possible. Keep windows and doors closed. Run a HEPA-filter air purifier if you have one. If you run an air conditioner, keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside.

Do not add to indoor pollution. Do not smoke, because smoking puts even more pollution into the air. Do not use anything that burns, such as candles, fireplaces, or gas stoves. Do not vacuum, because vacuuming stirs up particles already inside your home.

Follow your doctor's advice about medicines and about your respiratory management plan if you have asthma or another lung disease. Call your doctor if your symptoms worsen.

Do not rely on dust masks for protection. Paper "comfort" or "dust" masks commonly found at hardware stores are designed to trap large particles, such as sawdust. They often have one strap, but may have two. Dust masks, as well as surgical masks, will not protect your lungs from small particles in smoke. An "N95" mask has two straps and will be stamped "NIOSH", indicating it is a certified respirator. N95 masks can also be purchased at hardware stores. When properly worn, they can offer some protection. There needs to be a good seal at all points of contact with your face. Make sure the mask is the proper size for your face. It will not seal properly if there is any facial hair, even stubble. For more information about effective masks, see the recommendations provided by CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2003-144/>

Smoke Visibility Guide

Visibility	Air Quality	Cautionary Statements
10+ miles	Good	None
6 - 9 miles	Moderate	Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.
3 - 5 miles	Unhealthy for sensitive groups	People with heart or lung disease, the elderly and children should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.
1.5 – 2.5 miles	Unhealthy	People with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should avoid prolonged exertion; everyone else should limit prolonged exertion.
0.9 – 1.4 miles	Very Unhealthy	People with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should avoid any outdoor activity; everyone else should avoid prolonged exertion.
0.8 miles or less	Hazardous	Everyone should avoid any outdoor exertion; people with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should remain indoors.

To help get a better visibility estimate:

1. Face away from the sun.
2. Determine the limit of your visible range by looking for targets at known distances (miles).
3. Visible range is that point at which a high contrast object *totally* disappears.