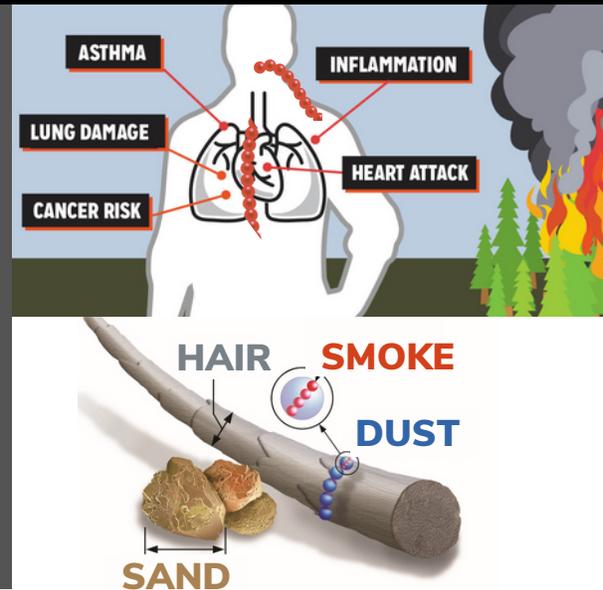


# TUTORIAL FOR WILDFIRE SMOKE AND TEXT/AUDIO ALERT SYSTEM

## Why is Wildfire Smoke Important?

Breathing wildfire smoke causes immediate health impacts such as burning eyes, chest pain, coughing, difficulty breathing, and rapid heart beating. Smoke particles are smaller than human hair and can be inhaled deep inside your lungs or bloodstream, causing long-term impacts like lung damage and even cancer. People with lung conditions such as asthma may have a harder time with symptoms or from recovering after inhaling wildfire smoke.



## What does the Cal OSHA Regulation Say About Protecting Outdoor Workers During Wildfire Smoke Events?

The employer is required to do the following for outdoor workers:

- check the Air Quality Index (AQI) at the beginning of every shift and throughout the day (see below for more info on AQI)
- provide NIOSH-approved masks, such as N95, for voluntary or required use, depending on the AQI for that day
- develop/implement a system to notify outdoor workers of wildfire smoke hazards that include procedures to notify employer if experiencing any symptoms, training on how to get an N95 mask and how to wear one. Click [here](#) for more information about wildfire smoke. The link is also included at the end of the second page.



## What is the Air Quality Index (AQI)?

The AQI is a way of knowing how many particles there are in the air. An AQI of 151-200 is considered unhealthy. Cal OSHA requires outdoor workers be provided with an approved mask by their employer, such as an N95, for voluntary use when the AQI reaches 151. Cal OSHA requires the employer to provide an approved mask to outside workers for required use if the AQI reaches 500 (hazardous), unless they can be relocated indoors or to an area with an acceptable level of AQI. You can download the app 'Smoke Spotter' to check the AQI/smoke in your area.



RED	UNHEALTHY	151-200
PURPLE	VERY UNHEALTHY	201-300
MAROON	HAZARDOUS	300+

## How Can We Help Notify Outdoor Workers?

The APCD has developed a simple text/audio-alert system that would notify supervisors and outdoor farmworkers in an efficient and direct way. Anyone can sign up with their cellphone by texting the word “SMOKE” for English or “HUMO” for spanish/zapoteco/mixteco to the number 855-522-0034. They will receive an automated text/audio message when both levels are reached. If the AQI is still at unacceptable levels the following day, subscribers will receive a second text.



## How Can You Sign Up for the Text/Audio Alert System?

Simply text the word “SMOKE” for english or “HUMO” for spanish/zapoteco/mixteco to the number **855-522-0034**. You will receive automated messages/audios from the APCD that may include links and images to help you understand the alerts. APCD is offering this service free of charge but check with your phone provider if they charge for texts according to your plan.



## Important Reminders:

- surgical masks, bandanas, cloth masks, are not approved to protect against wildfire smoke. An N95 is a cost-effective mask that's certified for this use.
- the N95 must be worn correctly or particles can still enter your lungs.
- wildfires can occur during periods of hot, dry conditions. Heat prevention measures (water, shade and rest periods) can also protect your health during wildfire events. Report your symptoms.
- farmworkers that sign up for text alerts will be better protected during wildfires. A healthy worker is a healthy picking!
- the AQI might show smoky conditions in an area where there is no fire present. This is due to winds carrying the smoke to other areas.



For more resources on the Ventura County Wildfire Smoke Text/Audio Alert Program, visit the APCD site at [www.vcapcd.org/smoke](http://www.vcapcd.org/smoke) or for Wildfire Smoke Prevention, please visit <https://aghealth.ucdavis.edu/wildfires>