



News Release

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For Immediate Release

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Air Quality Advisory Issued for Smoke/Ozone Today

The Clark County Department of Air Quality (DAQ) issued an advisory today for smoke and ground-level ozone due to wildfires burning near Mexicali at the Mexico/California border and a mulch pit fire northeast of the Las Vegas Valley, combined with weather conditions and existing levels of pollutants. The advisory is in effect today.

Smoke is made of small dust particles and other pollutants that can aggravate respiratory diseases.

At this time, unhealthy levels of air pollution are not occurring. Air Quality officials will continue to monitor conditions and will post an alert on the forecast page of the DAQ website if unhealthy levels actually occur. A link to the forecast page is located at <http://redrock.clarkcountynv.gov/forecast/>.

Ozone is a gas that occurs naturally in the upper atmosphere and protects earth from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. At ground level, ozone is a key ingredient of urban smog during the hottest months of the year in Clark County. Ground-level ozone can build up during the afternoon hours due to a combination of several factors, including strong sunlight, hot temperatures, and pollutants from automobiles and other sources such as transport and wildfires. Unhealthy doses of ground-level ozone can reduce lung function and worsen respiratory illnesses such as asthma or bronchitis. Exposure to ozone also can induce coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath even in healthy people. When ozone levels are elevated, everyone should limit strenuous outdoor activity, especially people with respiratory diseases. If you are experiencing breathing difficulties or medical conditions that you think are related to air quality, see your doctor. Officials suggest these tips to help reduce the formation of ground-level ozone:

- Fill up your gas tank after sunset.
- Plan errands so they can be done in one trip
- Try not to spill gasoline when filling up, and don't top off your gas tank.
- Keep your car well maintained.
- Use mass transit or carpool.
- Don't idle your car engine unnecessarily.
- Walk or ride your bike whenever practical and safe.
- Consider low-maintenance landscaping that uses less water and doesn't require the use of gas-powered lawn tools to maintain.
- Turn off lights and electronics when not in use. Less fuel burned at power plants means cleaner air.

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Airborne smoke/dust is a form of inhalable air pollution called particulate matter, or PM, which aggravates respiratory diseases such as bronchitis and asthma. It may be best for children, the elderly, and people with respiratory diseases to stay indoors. If you are experiencing breathing difficulties or medical conditions that you think are related to air quality, see your doctor.

- If you work outdoors, consider wearing a painter's mask or surgical mask. This will help reduce your exposure to dust and particulates.
- Limit outdoor exertion. Exercise, for example, makes you breathe heavier and increases the amount of particulates you are likely to inhale.
- Keep windows closed. Run your air conditioner inside your house and car. Your air conditioner filters out dust and particulates.
- Consider changing your indoor air filters if they are dirty.

Detailed air quality conditions are posted in the monitoring section of the DAQ website. You can receive free air quality forecasts and advisories via e-mail or text message through Enviroflash service. Subscription information is available at www.enviroflash.org.

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Clark County is a dynamic and innovative organization dedicated to providing top-quality service with integrity, respect and accountability. With jurisdiction over the world-famous Las Vegas Strip and covering an area the size of New Jersey, Clark is the nation's 12th-largest county and provides extensive regional services to more than 2 million citizens and 43 million visitors a year. Included are the nation's 9th-busiest airport, air quality compliance, social services and the state's largest public hospital, University Medical Center. The county also provides municipal services that are traditionally provided by cities to about 900,000 residents in the unincorporated area. Those include fire protection, roads and other public works, parks and recreation, and planning and development.