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## JOINT PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 8, 2020

# WILDFIRE SMOKE ALERT FOR THE PUGET SOUND REGION

This is an alert about wildfire smoke from the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and the health departments of King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Air pollution is increasing due to wildfire smoke and may cause health problems.

As of Tuesday morning (September 8, 2020), heavy wildfire smoke is present throughout much of King, Kitsap and Snohomish counties. Smoke has partially cleared in Pierce County, but is expected to return later in the day and overnight.

**Air quality conditions in most of the Puget Sound region are UNHEALTHY for everyone.**

Irregular winds may cause air quality in some areas to range between GOOD and UNHEALTHY today. We expect to see air quality across the Puget Sound region reach UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS and UNHEALTHY levels through Wednesday and possibly beyond.

Wildfire smoke can cause and worsen many health problems such as:

- Asthma attack
- Chest pain
- Coughing
- Fast heartbeat
- Headaches
- Irritated sinuses
- Stinging eyes
- Trouble breathing

Both COVID-19 and wildfire smoke affect the respiratory and cardiovascular systems and increase health risks, especially for sensitive populations.

Everyone should take precautions, especially infants, children, and people over 65, or those that are pregnant, have heart or lung diseases (such as asthma or COPD), respiratory infections, diabetes, stroke survivors, and those suffering from COVID-19:

- Stay at home when possible.
- Limit your activity outdoors, such as running, bicycling, physical labor, sports or hobbies.
- Close windows in your home, if possible, to keep the indoor air clean. If you have an air conditioner, use it in recirculation mode. Make sure your home ventilation system is maintained following manufacturer recommendations (e.g., replace filters regularly). Don't contribute to indoor air pollution. Use a [portable air cleaner](#) if available.
- Heat [can be dangerous](#) too. If it becomes unbearably hot, it's better to open the windows for a short period of time.
- Masks with the label "N95" or "N100" are the most effective type of mask that protects you from air pollution, but due to ongoing COVID-19 response we need to reserve those for health care and other frontline workers for now. While cloth face coverings are recommended to reduce the spread of COVID-19, they offer limited protection from air pollution and wildfire smoke and must be properly worn. Any mask or face covering should be used only as a last resort to protect against wildfire smoke. More information on COVID-19 mask do's and don'ts can be found [here](#).
- Check with your health care provider for more specific health questions and concerns. As always, seek medical attention if symptoms are serious.

For more information on ways to reduce your exposure to smoke, see the Washington Department of Health's [Smoke From Fire tips](#).

Fire danger is high and fire marshals have declared fire safety burn bans throughout our jurisdiction, prohibiting nearly all outdoor burning. To further prevent local pollution and help our most at-risk friends and neighbors during the COVID-19 pandemic, please avoid even small recreational fires.

Air quality conditions may change quickly. Check the air quality forecast regularly at the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's [website](#).

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