



# Plumas County Public Health Agency

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## For Immediate Release

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### Air Quality Advisory for August 2<sup>nd</sup> – August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Plumas County Public Health Agency (PCPHA) and Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) are issuing this update to notify residents of air quality that is of varying levels throughout the county due to wildfire smoke. Keep in mind that air quality can change rapidly at different times during the day, depending on fire and wind conditions. It is important to monitor smoke levels in your area throughout the day and make outdoor plans accordingly. Air quality is expected to be affected in localized areas until the wildfire is under control and extinguished.

People should use this general rule of thumb: If you can see and smell smoke around you, you are most likely being exposed to unhealthy smoke levels. The more smoke you see and smell, the more unhealthy the exposure. When air quality is poor, stay indoors and reduce levels of outdoor activity.

Sensitive groups, for which smoky conditions can be unhealthy, are: young children, the elderly, those with heart conditions, and anyone with respiratory ailments such as asthma, emphysema and bronchitis. We urge these residents in particular to take precautions whenever smoke is present, though all residents should use common sense.

Plumas County does not have access to continuous air quality monitoring in all of its communities. Instantaneous readings in various areas in the county have been at the “good” level. Even in areas that do have monitors, visibility can serve as a quick way to assess smoke levels, as smoke concentrations can vary widely within a couple of miles and change rapidly.

Below is a visibility chart to estimate the air quality in your area, make sure to take the following steps:

- Face away from the sun
- Determine the limit of your visibility range by looking at something at a known distance (miles). The visibility range is the point at which even high-contrast objects (e.g. dark mountain against the sky at noon) totally disappear.
- After determining visibility in miles, use the table to identify the level of health concern and the actions you might take to protect you and your family.

**THE VISIBILITY CHART BELOW MAY BE USED TO ESTIMATE THE AIR QUALITY IN YOUR AREA**

**Estimating Air Quality Index Levels from Visibility**

Air Quality Index	Level of Health Concern	Precautionary Actions	Visibility Range in Miles
0-50	Good	None	10+ miles
51-100	Moderate	Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion	5-10 miles
101-150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should limit time spent outdoors and reduce prolonged or heavy exertion	3-5 miles
151-200	Unhealthy	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should stay indoors and reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone should limit time spent outdoors and avoid prolonged or heavy exertion	1.5-3 miles
201-300	Very Unhealthy	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid all physical activities outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion	1-1.5 miles
301-500	Hazardous	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Everyone else should avoid all physical activity outdoors	Less than 1 mile

For information on fire conditions, please visit [www.plumascounty.us](http://www.plumascounty.us)

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