

## Smoky Skies Bulletin - August 9, 2019

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The Regions of BC highlighted on the map are being impacted or are likely to be impacted by wildfire smoke over the next 24-48 hours. The change in weather is resulting in smoke being carried into the Southern parts of BC east of the Similkameen. It is not clear how much of the smoke is from the Eagle Bluff fire near Oliver, but smoke transports models indicate that smoke from fires in Washington is moving into BC.

The next bulletin update will be available August 12, 2019.

The bulletin can be accessed online at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air/air-quality/air-advisories>.

### Be informed

During a wildfire, smoke conditions can change quickly over short distances and can vary considerably hour-by-hour.

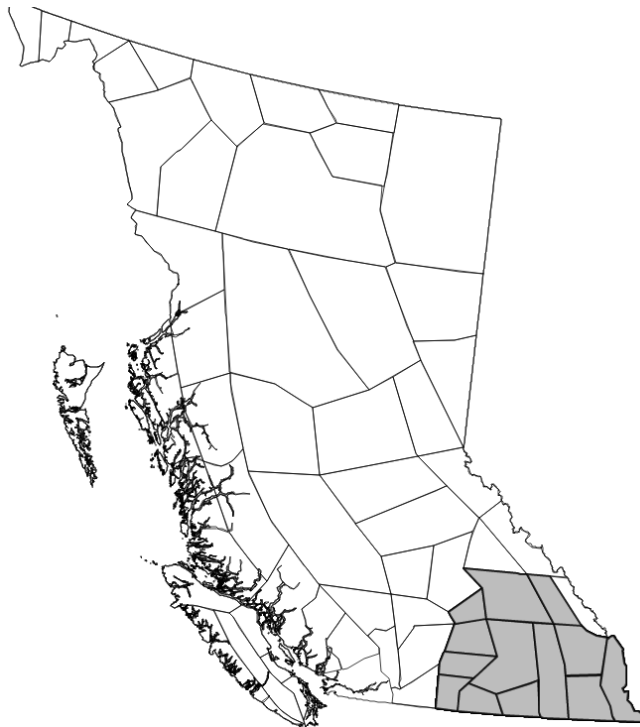
Wildfire smoke is a natural part of our environment but it is important to be mindful that exposure to smoke may affect your health.

People with pre-existing health conditions, the elderly, pregnant women and infants, children, and sensitive individuals are more likely to experience health effects from smoke exposure.

### During smoky conditions

#### Follow your common sense

- Stop or reduce your activity level if breathing becomes difficult or you feel unwell.
- Stay cool and drink plenty of fluids.
- Carry any rescue medications with you at all times.
- Make sure that children and others who cannot care for themselves follow the same advice.



A description of highlighted region(s) are provided at the end of the bulletin.

## Monitor your symptoms

- Different people have different responses to smoke. Mild irritation and discomfort are common, and usually disappear when the smoke clears.
- People with asthma or other chronic illness should activate the personal care plans they have designed with their family physicians.
- If you are unsure whether you need medical care, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.
- If you are experiencing difficulty in breathing, chest pain or discomfort, or a severe cough, contact your health care provider, walk-in clinic, or emergency department. If you are having a medical emergency, call 9-1-1.

## Tips to reduce your exposure

- Smoke levels may be lower indoors but will still be elevated, so stay aware of your symptoms even when you are indoors.
- Running a commercially available HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter can improve indoor air quality in the room where the device is located.
- If you have a forced air heating/cooling system in your home, it may help to change the filter and set the fan to run continuously.
- Reduce indoor air pollution sources such as smoking, burning incense, and frying foods.
- Consider going to a library, community center, or shopping mall with cooler filtered air to get some relief from the smoke.
- If travelling in a car with air conditioning, keep the windows up and the ventilation set to recirculate.
- If you are very sensitive to smoke, consider moving to another location with cleaner air, but be aware that conditions can change rapidly.
- Maintaining good overall health is a good way to prevent health effects resulting from short-term exposure to air pollution.

## More information

- For general information about wildfire smoke and your health, contact HealthLink BC:
  - Phone 8-1-1 (toll free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week), or
  - Check the Wildfires and Your Health webpage at <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/wildfires>.
- The current Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) and other air quality information is available at the BC Air Quality website, <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/bcairquality/readings/aqi-table.xml>.

- Forecasts of smoke levels over the next 48 hours are available from the Environment and Climate Change Canada FireWork prediction system, [https://weather.gc.ca/firework/index\\_e.html](https://weather.gc.ca/firework/index_e.html).
- If you need to work outdoors in smoky conditions, material can be found at the WorkSafe BC Wildfire FAQ website, <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/wildfire-smoke-frequently-asked-questions-faq>.
- First Nations Health Authority: <http://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/environmental-health/wildfire-information>
- Interior Health Authority: For resources related to forest fire smoke exposure, air quality, food safety when the power is out and ensuring your drinking water is safe visit <http://www.interiorhealth.ca> (Environment Tab/Emergency Information).

## Contact information

### Media and public inquiries regarding air quality and this bulletin:

Ralph Adams, Air Quality Meteorologist, Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy, 250-371-6279.

### Media questions regarding health implications of wildfires:

First Nations Health Authority  
 Environmental Public Health Services or Main FNHA Line: 604-693-6500  
 After Hours: 1-844-666-0711  
 Email: [Ephs.afterhours@fnha.ca](mailto:Ephs.afterhours@fnha.ca)  
 Media line: 604-831-4898

Interior Health Authority  
 Media line: 1-844-469-7077  
 Email: [media@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:media@interiorhealth.ca)

### Regions included under this bulletin:

**Elk Valley** includes Elko, Fernie, Sparwood and Elkford

**East Kootenay (North)** includes Edgewater, Invermere, Canal Flats and Skookumchuck

**East Kootenay (South)** includes Kimberley, Cranbrook, Yahk, Moyie, Wasa Lake Provincial Park, Jaffray, Grasmere and Roosville

**East Columbia** includes Golden

**West Columbia** includes Revelstoke

**Arrow Lakes - Slocan Lake** includes Slocan, New Denver, Nakusp, and Fauquier

**West Kootenay** includes Nelson, Castlegar, Trail, Rossland

**Kootenay Lake** includes Creston and Kaslo

**Shuswap** Includes Salmon Arm, Sicamous, and Chase.

**North Okanagan** includes Vernon, Armstrong, Enderby, Lavington and Lumby

**Boundary** includes Grand Forks, Midway and Greenwood

**Central Okanagan** includes Kelowna, Lake Country, West Kelowna and Peachland

**South Okanagan** includes Penticton, Summerland, Naramata, Keremeos, Oliver and Osoyoos