

Smoky Skies Bulletin — May 20, 2024

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 next bulletin update will be available May 21, 2024.

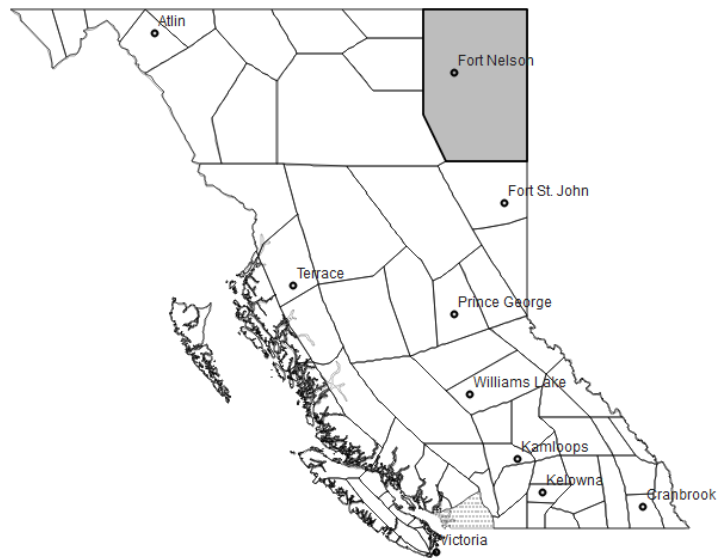
The bulletin can be accessed online at <https://www.gov.bc.ca/airqualityadvisories>

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, respiratory infections such as COVID-19, older adults, pregnant women and infants, children, and sensitive individuals are more likely to experience health effects from smoke exposure.



A description of current Bulletin Region(s) is provided at the end of this bulletin. Bulletin Regions do not include Metro Vancouver or the Fraser Valley Regional District.

During smoky conditions

Follow your common sense

- Stop or reduce your activity level if breathing becomes uncomfortable or you feel unwell.
- Stay cool and drink plenty of fluids.
- If you have asthma or other chronic illness, carry any rescue (fast-acting) medications with you at all times and activate your personal care plan that has been designed with your family physician.
- Make sure that children and others who cannot care for themselves follow the same advice.

Monitor your symptoms

- People respond differently to smoke. Mild irritation and discomfort are common, and usually disappear when the smoke clears.
- Exposure to wildfire smoke and the virus that causes COVID-19 can both result in respiratory symptoms such as a dry cough, sore throat, or difficulty breathing. Use the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to help determine whether you need further assessment or testing for COVID-19.
- 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 smoke 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.
- 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 additional general information about wildfire smoke and air quality:

Advisories for Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley Regional District:

- Metro Vancouver's Air Quality Data and Advisories page: <https://metrovancover.org/services/air-quality-climate-change/air-quality-data-and-advisories>

Air Quality Data

- Air Quality Health Index: <https://www.gov.bc.ca/airqualityhealthindex>
- Air Quality Map: <https://www.gov.bc.ca/airqualitymap>

Smoke forecasts (next 48 hours)

- Environment and Climate Change Canada FireWork prediction system: https://weather.gc.ca/firework/index_e.html
- Blue Sky Canada Smoke Forecasting System: <https://firesmoke.ca/forecasts/current>

For additional general information about wildfire smoke and your health:

BC Centre for Disease Control

- Wildfire smoke and your health: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/prevention-public-health/wildfire-smoke>
- Wildfire smoke and COVID-19: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/wildfires>

Provincial Health Authorities

- First Nations Health Authority: <http://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/environmental-health/wildfire-information>

HealthLink BC

- Wildfires and your health: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/wildfires>
- Phone 8-1-1 (toll free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Worksafe BC

- For information about working outdoors during smoky conditions, see the wildfire FAQ website: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/wildfire-smoke-frequently-asked-questions-faq>.

Contact information

Media and public inquiries regarding air quality and this bulletin:

Nick Davey, Air Quality Meteorologist, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy,
778-362-4477.

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
Media line: 604-831-4898

Northern Health Authority
Media Line: 1-877-961-7724

Regions included under this bulletin

Fort Nelson includes Fort Nelson, Muskwa, Prophet River, Buckinghorse River, Sikanni Chief, Hwy 77 north to the Yukon border,