FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 25, 2020

JOINT AIR QUALITY ADVISORY ISSUED BY THE
BUTTE COUNTY AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT and
BUTTE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

To:
Public Safety Personnel
News Media
Adjacent Air Quality Management Districts
Butte County & City Managers
Local/State Law & Fire Federal
Local Hospitals

School Officials
Sac. Valley Air Basin Coordinating Council
County Health Officer
California Air Resources Board
Environmental Protection Agency

From: Stephen Ertle, Air Pollution Control Officer
Danette York, M.P.H., Public Health Director

The Butte County Air Quality Management District Air Pollution Control Officer and the Butte County Public Health Director are updating this Joint Air Quality Advisory to remind the public about wildfire smoke impacts in Butte County due to several wildfires burning in Northern California. The smoke impacts to our area are continuing due to widespread fire activity throughout Northern California, leading to conditions that are considered **Unhealthy** in Butte County. Smoke impacts will vary based on wind direction and fire intensity.

Wildfire smoke is a complex mixture of air pollutants that are harmful to human health. The major air pollutant of concern is fine particulate matter also known as PM2.5. Exposure to air pollutants in wildfire smoke can irritate the eyes and airways, causing cough, a dry scratchy throat, runny nose, trouble breathing, and irritated sinuses.

**While all persons may experience varying degrees of symptoms, people at increased risk from smoke inhalation include:**
- Young children
- Older adults
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic respiratory and heart conditions
- People who work outside
- People experiencing homelessness

Persons experiencing questionable or severe symptoms should seek professional medical advice and treatment.
People can reduce smoke inhalation by taking the following actions:

- Limit outdoor exertion, especially children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions;
- If your child shows signs of compromised breathing or has respiratory conditions, follow your doctor’s directions regarding medicines and asthma management plans. Call your doctor if symptoms worsen.
- Keep doors and windows closed as much as possible in buildings and vehicles.
- When AQI levels reach Unhealthy levels (150 or higher), consider if the work needed to be completed outside is essential. Typically, N95 particulate masks can be worn during smoke-related events. However, these masks are in short supply due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Remember that a dust mask, cloth face covering, or medical mask will not filter out smoke!** Staying indoors is the best option to reduce exposure to wildfire smoke.
- Try to limit sources of air pollution in your home (smoking, use of incense or candles, and frying food are some examples of indoor air pollution sources).
- If you have air conditioning, make sure your setting is on “recirculate” both in your car and in your home to use inside air rather than drawing in air from the outside.
- Use high efficiency air filters (rated MERV-13 or higher) for your HVAC system if possible. Portable HEPA filters can also be used (avoid Ozone-producing air purifiers).
- Track air quality in your area through websites or mobile apps to plan your activity before heading out. The BCAQMD website ([www.butteairquality.com](http://www.butteairquality.com)) has daily air quality forecasts as well as links to real-time air quality data. **Airnow.gov** is the primary resource for air quality conditions throughout the nation. Other websites with information include:
  - [http://californiasmokeinfo.blogspot.com/](http://californiasmokeinfo.blogspot.com/)
  - [https://fire.airnow.gov/](https://fire.airnow.gov/)

This notification will remain in effect while fires affecting our region remain active. Outdoor residential burning is currently prohibited by CAL FIRE. More information including access to air quality data is available at [www.bcaqmd.org](http://www.bcaqmd.org) or [www.butteairquality.com](http://www.butteairquality.com). Questions may be directed to 530-332-9400 during regular business hours.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index Values</th>
<th>Levels of Health Concern</th>
<th>Cautionary Statements</th>
<th>Visibility Range in Miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-50</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>10+ miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100*</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.</td>
<td>5 – 10 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-150</td>
<td>Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups</td>
<td>People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.</td>
<td>3 – 5 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151-200</td>
<td>Unhealthy</td>
<td><strong>People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.</strong></td>
<td>1.5 – 2.5 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-300</td>
<td>Very Unhealthy</td>
<td>People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.</td>
<td>1 – 1.25 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-500</td>
<td>Hazardous</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>&lt; 0.75 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>