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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARSON CITY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES NEWS RELEASE

The Health Threat from Wildfire Smoke

Carson City, Nev. – Carson City Health and Human Services has been receiving several calls about the impact of the smoke from the Ferguson Fire near Yosemite National Park. The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) and Carson City Health and Human Services continue to monitor air quality concerns from smoke drifting into the area from this fire. As of this writing, the air quality in Carson City is at the “unhealthy” level for sensitive groups. Based on National Weather Service forecasts, NDEP expects unhealthy air quality conditions to remain in Carson City throughout this evening and into tomorrow.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is an index for reporting daily air quality and the possible associated health effects. When conditions cause an “unhealthy” air designation, people with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. When smoke levels are high enough, even healthy people may experience symptoms, such as coughing, a shortness of breath, chest pain, headaches and stinging eyes.

What Should You Be Doing?

1. **Stay indoors with windows and doors closed; run air-conditioner on “recirculate” setting.** Keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside. Minimize the use of swamp coolers. If it becomes too warm indoors, individuals may consider leaving the area to seek alternative shelter.
2. **Do not add to indoor pollution.** When smoke levels are high, do not use anything that burns, such as candles, fireplaces, or gas stoves. Do not vacuum, because vacuuming stirs up particles already inside your home. Do not smoke, because smoking puts even more pollution into the air.
3. **Follow your doctor's advice** about medicines and about your respiratory management plan if you have asthma or another lung disease, Call your doctor if your symptoms worsen. If you evacuate, make sure you take all essential medications along with you.
4. **Do not rely on dust masks or N95 respirators for protection.** If you wish to wear something, use a wet handkerchief or bandana to cover your mouth and nose. The key – keep it moist.
5. **When driving** make sure to drive with the windows rolled up and the air conditioner on “recirculate.”
6. **Minimize or stop outdoor activities**, especially exercise, during smoky conditions.
7. People who must spend time outdoors should **drink plenty of fluids.**
8. Additionally, **pet owners** should consider bringing their pets indoors out of the unhealthy air conditions, if possible. This is especially important for older pets.
9. **Stay tuned** to local radio and TV for emergency announcements about air quality.
10. **Stay in touch** with family and friends, especially if you live alone. Exercise your communications plan.



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To keep up-to-date on the status of the air quality in Carson City, check:

https://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.local_city&mapcenter=0&cityid=819

For more information on the health implications of wildfires, go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/index.html>.

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