UC Berkeley has measures in place to inform you of, and protect you from, the dangers of inhaling wildfire smoke.

Read the information below, based on Cal/OSHA Appendix B to Title 8 Section 5141.1. The standard is applicable when the current Air Quality Index for fine particulate matter (PM2.5) exceeds 150. It applies to employees who work outside or in non-filtered buildings and/or vehicles for more than one hour per shift.

### Locate the local Air Quality Index

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a measurement of pollution in air. Although there are AQIs for several pollutants, Title 8 section 5141.1 is based on the AQI for PM2.5. PM2.5 has a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or smaller and is considered the most harmful size of particulate matter.

Locate the AQI for your area at:
- [www.AirNow.gov](http://www.AirNow.gov)
- [https://tools.airfire.org](https://tools.airfire.org)
- [www.arb.ca.gov/capcos/dismap.htm](http://www.arb.ca.gov/capcos/dismap.htm)
- [www.enviroflash.info](http://www.enviroflash.info)

If you do not have access to the internet, contact your supervisor for the current AQI in your area.

### Participate in two-way Communication

Supervisors must establish a means of communicating worsening air quality conditions to employees. If the AQI becomes harmful, you will be alerted in-person, via text, email, website, radio, or other effective method. Notify your supervisor if you notice the air quality is worsening, or if you’re suffering symptoms due to the air quality.

### Properly Select & Use Respiratory Protection

When the AQI level for PM2.5 is above 150, the University will provide you with respirators for voluntary use. If the AQI level exceeds 500, use of a properly fit respirator is required for any critical outdoor work.

### Importance & Benefits

The University will select respirators certified for protection against the specific air contaminants in your workplace. When properly selected and worn, respirators effectively reduce your exposure to wildfire smoke and protect your health. Check your respirator or respirator packaging for a label or statement of certification from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

### Limitations

Review and follow instructions from the manufacturer on the respirator’s use, maintenance, cleaning, care, and limitations. Also follow instructions from the manufacturer and University regarding medical evaluations, fit testing, and shaving.

A N-95 filtering facepiece respirator is the minimum level of protection for wildfire smoke.

For more information regarding how to properly put on, use, and maintain a N-95 respirator, visit [http://uc.wildfire](http://uc.wildfire), see the handout attached, or scan the QR code below.

### Examples of protective controls

The University may implement include:

- Locate work in protected areas where air is filtered (enclosed structures or vehicles)
- Change procedures (i.e. move workers to a place with lower current AQI for PM2.5)
- Reduce work time in areas with unfiltered air
- Increase rest time and frequency; provide rest area with filtered air
- Reduce the physical intensity of work to help lower breathing and heart rates

Consult with your supervisor for questions about additional protections that may be available to you.

### Contact your supervisor to discuss controls appropriate for your worksite.

### University Health Services

Located at 2222 Bancroft Way (or 642-2000) provides medical treatment to employees who become ill or injured due to wildfire smoke exposure during work. Follow campus procedures to obtain prompt medical treatment without fear of reprisal.

After hours assistance: uhs.berkeley.edu/after-hours

Emergency: Call 911

### AQI Categories for PM2.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AQI Category</th>
<th>Level of Health Concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 50</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 100</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 to 150</td>
<td>Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151 to 200</td>
<td>Unhealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 to 300</td>
<td>Very Unhealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301 to 500</td>
<td>Hazardous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At AQI levels of 150 or above for PM2.5, the University must take additional precautions to protect you from wildfire smoke.
N-95 filtering facepiece respirators are air-purifying respirators certified by NIOSH to have a filter efficiency of 95% or greater. N-95 respirators filter airborne contaminants including dusts, fumes, mists, and microbial agents such as tuberculosis bacteria & flu virus. An N-95 filtering facepiece respirator is the minimum level of protection for wildfire smoke. Respirator use can be beneficial even when the AQI for PM2.5 is 150 or less.

How to Put on N-95 Respirators

1. Read Instructions. Wash your hands. Hold the respirator in one hand, with nosepiece at your fingertips. Let the straps hang loosely.

2. Place respirator under your chin, with the nosepiece up. Hold the respirator with one hand and pull the top strap over your head. Rest it on top of head.

3. Pull the bottom strap over your head and place it around your neck, below your ears.

4. Use both hands to mold the nosepiece to the shape of your nose by pushing inward with your fingertips. Check for secure fit.

5. Seal check. Cover respirator completely with hands and exhale sharply. If air escapes, readjust your respirator (steps 3 & 4).

Note: The proper way to put on a respirator depends on the type and model of the respirator. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions.

Proper Use & Maintenance

- Choose N-95 respirators certified to protect against the contaminant of concern.
- Read & follow instructions from the manufacturer.
- Check for a tight seal around the face every time you put the respirator on. The more air leaks under the seal, the less protection you receive.
- Keep track of your respirator as to not mistakenly use someone else’s.
- Inspect the respirator prior to use; check for damage and contamination.
- Replace your respirator if it becomes damaged, deformed, dirty, or difficult to breathe through.
- Ask your doctor before using a respirator if you have a lung or heart problem.
- Go to an area with cleaner air, take off the respirator, and seek medical help, if you experience symptoms (i.e. difficulty breathing, dizziness, or nausea).
- Dispose of the respirator in the normal trash, unless it was used in a medical facility or research area with specific disposal procedures, or if there is evidence it may be contaminated.
- Do NOT use surgical masks or other items over your nose and mouth (i.e. scarves, T-shirts, bandannas). They will not provide protection against wildfire smoke.
- Do NOT wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which it is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or highly toxic materials.
- Do NOT attempt to reuse, clean, or disinfect disposable filtering facepiece respirators.

Required Use

N-95 respirators may be required as personal protective equipment, depending on your job responsibilities. Regarding wildfire smoke, you must wear a respirator when the current AQI is greater than 500. For required use, you must obtain 1.) Medical Evaluation and clearance, 2.) Training on an annual basis, and 3.) Fit testing for proper fit (annually). To ensure adequate protection, do not wear respirator models and sizes for which you have not been fit-tested by EH&S.

Limitations

N-95 respirators only filter out particulate contaminants. They do not protect you from chemical vapors/gases, oxygen deficient atmosphere, high risk exposures such as those created by aerosol-generating procedures (i.e. bronchoscopy, autopsies) and asbestos handling. Facial hair reduces the effectiveness of N95 respiratory protection, but shaving is not required for voluntary use. If you have facial hair, you may wear a loose-fitting powered air purifying respirator.

Questions

For questions about training, air monitoring on campus, or respirators:

Contact the Office of Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S) at 510-642-3073 or ehs@berkeley.edu

During a wildfire smoke event, campus updates and health advisories will be posted by:

University Health Services at uhs.berkeley.edu