



Smoke from wildfires will affect air quality in Maine on Monday and Tuesday

AUGUSTA, July 26, 2021 — Particle pollution concentrations have begun to rise in the Western Mountains region several hours earlier than expected on Monday, July 26th according to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). This is due to smoke from fires in central & western Canada as well the western US moving into the region and reaching the ground. Levels in Maine are expected to continue rising through the day from Northwest to Southeast. We expect that particle pollution levels will remain high overnight and through much of Tuesday. Levels are expected to clear out Tuesday evening.

The standard for particle pollution is a 24-hour average and we believe that the average beginning midday on Monday through Tuesday afternoon and possibly into the early evening hours will reach the Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups range on the Air Quality Index for Maine. Northern areas are expected to clean out first on Tuesday while the remainder of the state is not likely to see cleaner air until evening.

Please check the web site as that will be updated frequently:

<https://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/index.html>

At elevated particle pollution levels, children, healthy adults who exert themselves, and individuals suffering from a respiratory disease such as asthma, bronchitis or COPD can experience reduced lung function and irritation. When this happens, individuals may notice a shortness of breath, coughing, throat irritation, and/or experience an uncomfortable sensation in their chest. Additionally, those with a heart disease should also follow these recommendations.

Some actions you can take to protect your health during periods of unhealthy air quality include:

- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity.
- If you are indoors, close windows and circulate indoor air with a fan or air conditioner.

- The Maine CDC Asthma Prevention and Control Program has asthma information available at their web site:
<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/mat/index.htm>
- For more information on asthma control visit EPA's Web site epa.gov/asthma to find information about asthma triggers and lessons on asthma management.

In addition to those in a sensitive group, sports coaches, elder care workers, nurses and others who are responsible for the welfare of people impacted by poor air quality are urged to use one of the listed tools to follow the Air Quality Forecast:

- **Air Quality Forecast page:** <http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/> which has links to:
 - **EnviroFlash**, EPA's email and text alert system,
<http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/enviroflash.html>
 - **Twitter**, for sign up information go to:
<http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/twitter.html>
 - **EPA's mobile app** is available at: <http://m.epa.gov/apps/airnow.html>
- DEP's **toll free air quality hotline** is 1-800-223-1196

For more information call the contacts listed above or go to DEP's air quality web site <http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/>.

For additional information, contact:
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