

# National Safety Talk



## Wildfire Air Quality Protection

### FOR EMPLOYEES

USPS employees face various environmental conditions while performing their daily duties, including the risks associated with increased ozone, smoke, gases and fine particles in the air from wildfires. Not everyone who is exposed to wildfire smoke will experience health issues. However, everyone should understand the health effects of breathing wildfire smoke.

### Signs and symptoms associated with unhealthy air quality due to wildfire smoke are:

- Headaches, stinging eyes, runny nose, irritated sinuses
- A scratchy throat, coughing
- Trouble breathing normally, wheezing, asthma attack
- Chest pain, fast heartbeat, fatigue

### Those who are most at risk are:

- People with lung diseases, such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema
- Children
- Older adults
- Active people of all ages who exercise or work vigorously outdoors

### If you experience any of the above symptoms or notice them in your coworkers:

- Find a safe location indoors, if possible, and contact your supervisor immediately for assistance
- Seek protection by using N95 masks and drink plenty of water
- Utilize authorized breaks to reduce activity levels
- Seek medical assistance, if necessary

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established national air quality standards, the Air Quality Index (AQI) to protect public health and to make it easier for people to understand the level of air pollutants in the air. The AQI also identifies who needs to be concerned and what to do if there is a concern.

0 - 50	Good	Green
51 - 100	Moderate	Yellow
101 - 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Orange
151 - 200	Unhealthy	Red
201 - 300	Very Unhealthy	Purple
301 - 500	Hazardous	Maroon

Daily local air quality conditions can be accessed at [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov).

**Always Remember: Safety Depends on Me!**