

Smoke Ready Communities

What a Smoke Ready Community? And why is this important?

People need local information about air quality and severity of smoke during wildfires or planned fires. A community can help citizens and visitors learn about smoke and fire, local air quality during a fire, how to keep indoor air clean, when they may safely go outside and a safe place within the community where they can stay. The Greater Yellowstone Fire Action Network will work with communities in the area to develop a smoke ready plan.

A smoke ready community has formal action plans to reduce threats to public health, the community and visitors during fire and smoke events. A smoke ready community program includes partnerships with air quality agencies, land management officials, local businesses, healthcare providers, the media, public health officials, emergency management agencies, and stakeholders including residents, visitors, and neighborhood representatives among others.

A community smoke ready plan includes assessment of local vulnerabilities, plans for appropriate responses, strategies to alert residents and visitors about air quality and smoke, resources available to the community, and actions to take during a fire and smoke event. Being smoke-ready means that communities and individuals have the knowledge and ability to stay reasonably safe and healthy during smoke episodes.

A smoke-ready community:

- Prepares and empowers its residents with evidence-based, locally relevant information during fire-related smoke events and recommends actions for residents and visitors to reduce public health impacts from smoke.
- Communicates current and forecasted air quality outlooks that include smoke severity and trends expected at tourist attractions and recreational areas, safe times to be outside, and areas to avoid.
- Understands that a range of appropriate preparedness activities may depend on a variety of community attributes such as, underlying vulnerabilities of local populations, the forecasted risk for wildfires, the frequency and severity of smoke impacts, and the nature of the fire event (wildfire, prescribed fire, residential wood burning).
- Shares web, video, and written literature on how to improve indoor air quality, properly wear a respirator, and avoid smoke exposure when possible. A smoke-ready community program provides educational presentations and workshops to citizens, businesses, and institutions regarding resources available during smoke events, best practices for retrofitting buildings and planning for businesses ahead of extended smoke events.
- Provides approaches individuals can take such as creating a “clean room” at home, purchasing an air filter, knowing how to determine current air quality, minimizing indoor sources of air pollution, and limiting time outdoors during periods of excessive smoke.
- Creates clean air shelters, educates residents to understand the health risks of smoke and how to access decision tools, and has resources on hand to help vulnerable and under-served residents.

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References:

https://www.airnow.gov/sites/default/files/2021-09/wildfire-smoke-guide_0.pdf

<https://www.wildlandfiresmoke.net/smoke-ready>

<https://www.epa.gov/smoke-ready-toolbox-wildfires>

<https://www.airnow.gov/wildfires/be-smoke-ready/>

<https://www.airnow.gov/sites/default/files/2021-07/prepare-for-fire-season.pdf>

[Protect Your Health During Wildfires \(lung.org\)](#)

[Wildfires and Lung Health | American Lung Association](#)