



CCLHO/CAPCOA
Air-Borne Emergency
Response Procedure
October 17, 2007

County Health Department

Air-Borne Emergency Response Procedure Table of Contents

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Pre-Event: Preparedness and Planning

- I. Ensure familiarity with the primary emergency response agency **plans** and procedures as they pertain to:
 - a. Fires
 - b. Explosions
 - c. Traffic collisions with fire and/or release of gas
 - d. Train incidents
 - e. Industrial releases

- II. Ensure familiarity with **Incident Command** and where your roles and responsibilities lie within the emergency response agency's plans as indicated in (I.)
 - a. If _____ County Health Department (__CHD) is expected to respond promptly to determine potential impact, to determine need and extent of evacuation, and/or to request evacuation or shelter in place, __CHD will participate in a **Unified Command** Structure. As a Unified Command participant, you will work with the Initial Emergency Response Agency previously referenced to determine the main objectives necessary to:
 - i. Preserve Life
 - ii. Preserve Health
 - iii. Preserve Environment
 - iv. Preserve Property

 - b. If __CHD is expected to respond promptly to provide technical assistance regarding material and plume direction, __CHD will function in the Planning Section as a **technical specialist**.

 - c. __CHD may, ultimately, be called upon to certify an incident as being complete, safe, and clear to enter

 - d. If __CHD is expected to respond as in (IIa) above and there are casualties and/or persons **surging the local hospitals**, __CHD may be required to appoint a capable person to the Medical/Health Branch Director position. This will be necessary to obtain and funnel resources to the local medical community responding to multiple victims.

- III. Ensure **contact information** for __CHD and procedures for immediate contact are accurate and distributed to all agencies that may need to contact you.
- IV. Ensure all **resource contact information** and procedure for contacting is accurate and available to you 24/7 (Appendices I, II, and III). This information may be most beneficial if available to all emergency response agencies in the event __CHD is a part of the affected.
- V. Identify those areas with the **highest risk** and the potential involved i.e., paint factory, water treatment facility, and CUPA identified facilities. Pre-knowledge of these facilities and the potential chemicals that may be released with pre-planned response scenarios will expedite the decision making process for evacuations
- VI. Pre-knowledge regarding “typical” **wind direction and diurnal patterns**, seasonal vs. weather event, will help expedite the initial recommendations regarding an event plume’s behavior and should be integrated in to various scenarios to prepare for actual events.
- VII. Ensure good **communication** and teamwork is promoted on a regular basis between all potential response agencies.

Event: Notification, Response, and Mitigation

I. Notification:

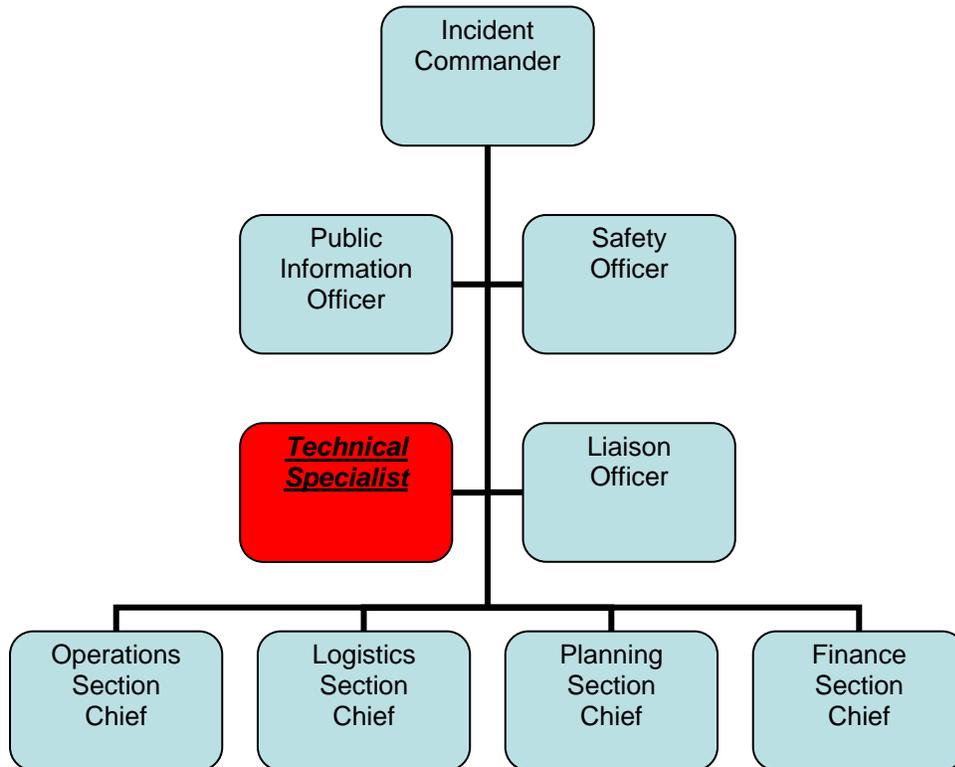
A. Upon event notification, request the following:

- i. caller's information
- ii. re-contact information
- iii. agency affiliation
- iv. specific directions

(Generally, the initial notification will be made by someone other than the primary response agency at scene. This person will be given direction to either request your presence at a specified location, or to request you contact a designated person directly related to the incident via phone. If you become disconnected before retrieving all the information, by obtaining the caller's information first, you can return the call without wasting important time.)

II. Response in a Supportive Role (As a Technical Specialist):

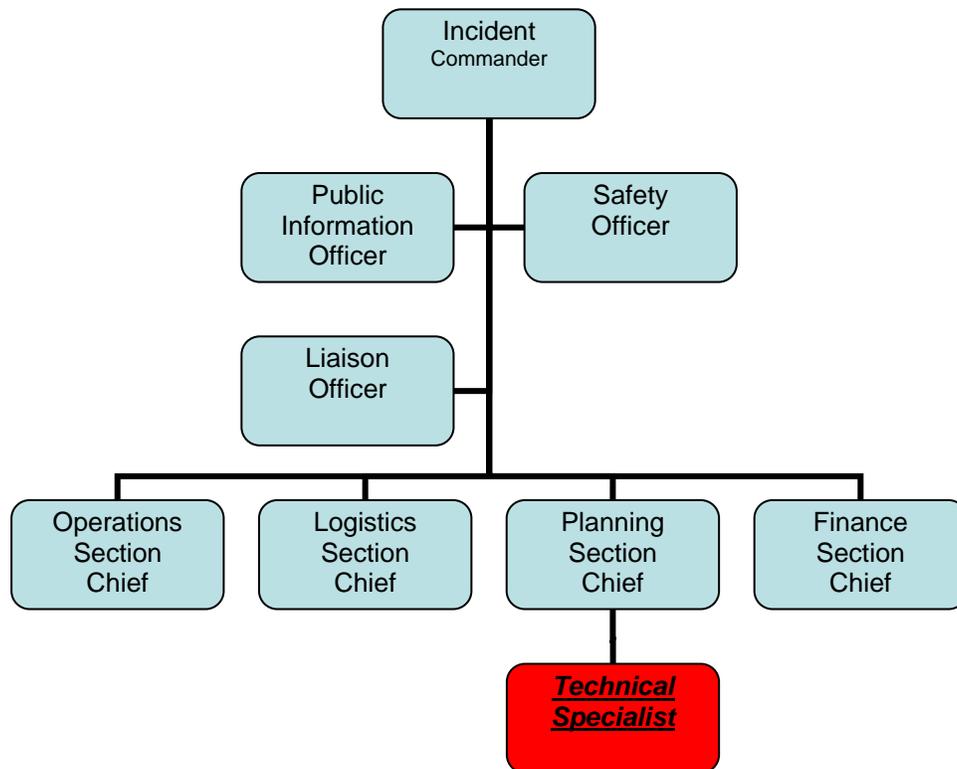
- A. It is possible you will be requested to go **to the Incident Command Post** for technical advice purposes. This will maintain your services as a solely designated resource within the command structure and will then designate you a part of the Command Staff (not to be confused with Commander).



- i. If you are instructed to go to a specific location, request information regarding where the actual incident is so as not to delay your arrival by driving directly into an area blocked off by evacuation or into traffic blocks secondary to detours around the area. You may also request routing directions for the most efficient access to the area.
- ii. Do not forget your resource call down lists (Appendices I, II, & III)
- iii. Upon arrival at the specifically requested location, look for signs indicating "Incident Command Post" or "IC". There may be a "check in" sign.

- iv. At the Incident Command Post, identify yourself and who requested your response.
- v. Determine who the Incident Commander is.
- vi. Obtain a briefing and what is requested from you.

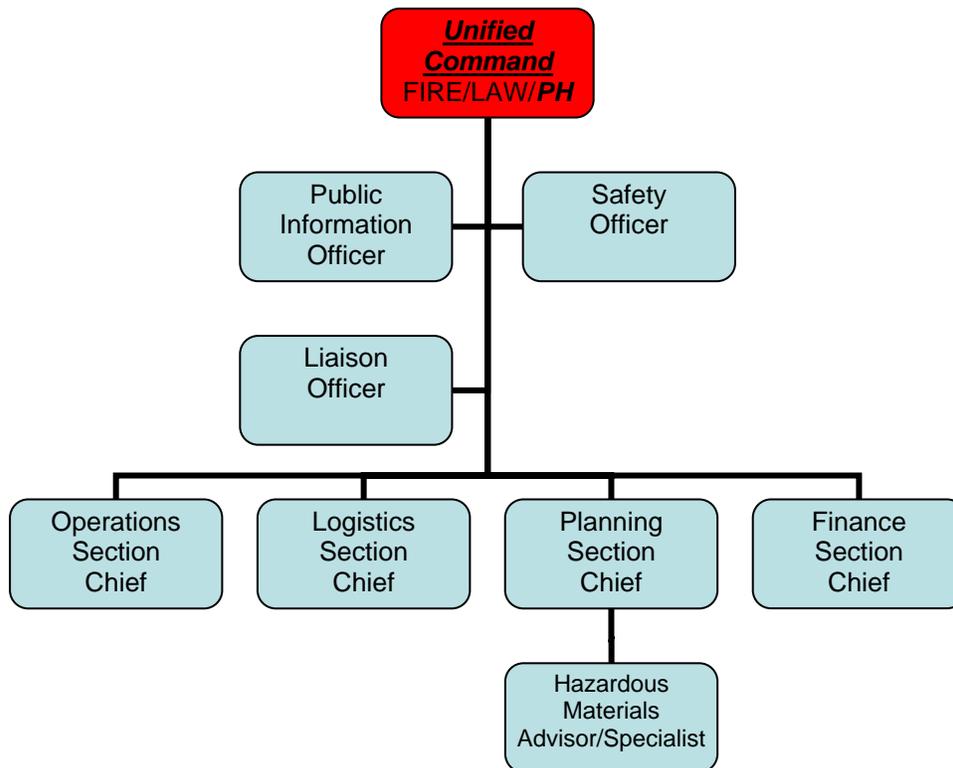
- B. If you are instructed to contact an **Incident Command by phone**, do so immediately. (This is possible in those instances where the event is small and/or you do not have an emergency response command role. For these situations, you will be considered a technical specialist)



- i. After reaching the Agency's designee by phone, obtain the following information:
1. Person and their Incident Designation
 2. Who – The agency in charge of command (Incident Commander)
 3. What – Event briefing
 4. When – When did it start and when did it stop
 5. Where – Specific location and affected area
 6. Why – Why are they calling you?
 7. How – How can you help them?

- ii. Maintain phone connection in the event you need to obtain further details regarding the scene conditions
- iii. Using **Appendix II: Resource People and Response Agencies**, obtain the information requested by contacting the most appropriate agency.
 - 1. Provide the event information to the mapping and modeling agency.
 - 2. Relay requested information to the incident contact
 - 3. Provide an update to the mapping and modeling agency as needed

III. Response in a Command Role:



If you are instructed to go to a specific location, request information regarding where the actual incident is so as not to delay your arrival by driving directly into an area blocked off by evacuation or into traffic blocks secondary to detours around the area. You may also request routing directions for the most efficient access to the area.

- i. Upon arrival at the specifically requested location, look for signs indicating “Incident Command Post” or “IC”. There may also be a “Check In” sign.
- ii. At the Incident Command Post, identify yourself and who requested your response. Determine who the Incident Commander is.
- iii. Request an Event Briefing
- iv. Establish Unified Command

IV. Mitigation

A. The Unified Command will **determine** the primary incident **Objectives** based on event and on going response. These objectives **may** include:

1. (Objective 1) Air-Borne **Plume Behavior**

a. Contact the most appropriate agency for event specific projections (Appendix II: Resource People and Response Agencies)

2. (Objective 2) Fire/Smoke Suppression (if fire involved)

a. This objective will be met by Fire Service

b. May request information regarding substance, exposure, and reaction to determine appropriate suppression method.

3. (Objective 3) Identify the **Population at Risk**

a. Immediate risk (no time to evacuate and/or special needs populations unable to evacuate in a given timeframe)

b. Delayed risk (time to evacuate if necessary)

c. Minor risk (may need to evacuate or shelter-in-place in the future)

4. (Objective 4) Air-Borne **Substance Identification**

a. Contact the most appropriate agency for facility-specific chemical information (Appendix II: Resource People and Response Agencies) or the facility owner/operator.

5. (Objective 5) Order **Shelter-in-Place or evacuations** as appropriate

a. Law Enforcement, if not already a component of the Unified Command, will become a part of the Unified Command to focus on this objective.

6. (Objective 6) Establish **Surveillance**

- a. Call local Emergency Departments and Medical Clinics (Appendix III: Surveillance and Regional Assistance)
- b. Consider providing Emergency Departments with written periodic updates as you request surveillance information

B. A **Public Information Officer (PIO)** may have been appointed. If not, immediately appoint a PIO and request any personnel resources the PIO requests to complete his task.

1. Direct the PIO to accomplish the following: (English, Spanish, TDD, and/or other)
 - a. “Immediate Risk” Population: Reverse 911 and/or warning signals and Emergency Radio Broadcast for them to Shelter in Place. Advise special needs populations of need to Shelter-in-Place if located in the immediate impact area.
 - b. “Delayed Risk” Population: Reverse 911 and/or warning signals and Emergency Radio Broadcast regarding Shelter-in-Place or impending evacuation.
 - c. “Minor Risk” Population: Reverse 911 and/or warning signals and Emergency Radio Broadcast requesting they do not use phones or cell phones, to standby for direction regarding need to Shelter-in-Place or evacuate, to stay inside and off of roadways so evacuees have open access to evacuate.
 - d. Establish the Joint Information Committee and request a representative from all involved agencies.
 - e. Contact the media and schedule a press conference.
 - f. Develop, obtain approval of, and disseminate Health Alert notices (see Appendix V for examples).
 - g. Contact all Emergency Medical Response Agencies (Appendix III: Surveillance and Regional Assistance) and advise them of actual casualty potential.

- h. Develop a message describing the event and how the event situation is being improved. In case of evacuations, it is imperative the PIO stresses the importance of the unaffected to stay off the roadways and off the phone lines so evacuations may be accomplished safely and expediently.
 - i. Set a schedule for updating the media
 - j. Implement risk communication procedures for the area including internet information and hot line information.
 - k. Contact the County Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator (MHOAC) [or the Regional Disaster Medical Health Coordinator (RDMHC) if you are the MHOAC] to request immediate notification of all jurisdictions/areas surrounding the affected area.
- C. Frequently analyze the risk potential for the remaining persons. Rapid response decisions to Shelter-in-Place or evacuate will improve overall outcome.
- D. Frequent updates regarding persons affected and control measures taken must be implemented to prevent hype and panic
- E. As the event progresses, the objectives may change, whereby operations will change. If the release begins to produce casualties, be they actual or “worried well”, the objectives may have to include triage, treatment and transport of the medically ill. Should this occur, refer to the EMS Mutual Aid and/or Mass Casualty Plan for __CHD
- F. If the release is hazardous and persistent, evacuees may not be able to return to their homes. Therefore, additional objectives may need to be considered regarding displaced persons: providing shelters, housing, food, and chronic medical care assistance. Follow local plans and procedures regarding long term evacuation and evacuee care.

Recovery: Certification and Debriefing

I. Certification

- A. Follow applicable guidelines regarding assessing, testing and analysis of Hazardous Substances.
- B. Based upon test findings, determine whether the scene is or is not safe and clear to enter.
- C. When the air-borne release has cleared the area and is no longer a threat to the community, allow evacuees entry in to their homes. Consider requesting a door to door assessment of those individuals required to shelter in place.
- D. Direct the PIO to alert all populations in the area via Reverse 911 and Emergency Radio Broadcast of ability to enter the evacuated area and/or open their homes. (The faster this is done, the “happier” the population will be)
- E. When a scene is no longer hazardous, certify completion and follow local guidelines to formalize the decision.

II. Debriefing

- A. Participate in event debriefings, discuss, and more importantly, implement “best practices” as well as corrective actions deriving from the event.
- B. Event analysis is necessary to determine corrective actions needed to improve future response. Provide written descriptions of the event with supporting documentation to the Planning Section Chief (or agency with the primary responsibility)
- C. The PIO and JIC functions will be maintained long after the actual event has concluded and will most likely play an important role in the final report released to the media and populations. On going rumor control and citizen education are crucial in providing wellness and security to those affected by the air-borne release.

Appendix I

Local Contact Information

A. Local Office of Emergency Services (O.E.S.)

(Choose appropriate local agency: Fire, Police, Haz-Mat, OES, Environmental Health, County Administration)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Pager: _____

Cell: _____

B. Dispatch/Incident Command

Phone: _____

C. Local Air Pollution Control District

Name (A.P.C.O. or Designate): _____

24 Hour Phone: _____

Pager: _____

Cell: _____

Appendix II

Resource People and Response Agencies

I. Information on Hazardous Chemicals in Plume:

Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Pager: _____

Cell: _____

Air Pollution Control District (APCD)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Pager: _____

Cell: _____

II. For Predicted Plume Behavior (info needed to assess population exposure pattern)

A. Local Air Pollution Control District
(larger districts may be able to do this)

B. Cal OES Warning Center (they will get the information from Air Resources Board)

24 Hour Phone: (916) 845-8911 or 1-800-852-7550

C. Air Resources Board Contact Person:

CARB Emergency Response Coordinator

Office Phone: 916-322-3726

24 Hour Phone: 916-919-4017

D. Lawrence Livermore Lab

24 Hour Emergency Phone: 925-424-6465

Or Ron Basket 925-423-6731

Or Gayle Sugiyama 925-422-7266

Appendix III

Contacts for Surveillance And Regional Assistance

A. Hospitals

1. Name of Facility: _____

Contact Person(s): _____

Phone: _____

2. Name of Facility: _____

Contact Person(s): _____

Phone: _____

B. Ambulance Services

1. Name of Facility: _____

Contact Person(s): _____

Phone: _____

2. Name of Facility: _____

Contact Person(s): _____

Phone: _____

C. Regional Assistance

1. OES Region Regional Disaster Medical Health Specialist (RDMHS):

Name: _____

Contact: _____

Appendix IV

Wildfire Smoke Guide

Wildfire Smoke
A Guide for Public Health Officials



<http://www.arb.ca.gov/smp/progdev/pubeduc/wfgv8.pdf>

Table 3. Recommended Actions for Public Health Officials

Category	PM2.5 or PM10 Levels (mcg/M³, 1- to 3-hr avg.)	Visibility - Arid Conditions (miles)	Recommended Actions
Good	0 - 40	> 10	If smoke event forecast, implement communication plan
Moderate	41 - 80	6 – 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issue public service announcements (PSAs) advising public about health effects/symptoms and ways to reduce exposure - Distribute information about exposure avoidance
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	81 - 175	3 – 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If smoke event projected to be prolonged, evaluate and notify possible sites for clean air shelters - If smoke event projected to be prolonged, prepare evacuation plans
Unhealthy	176 - 300	1.5 - 2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider “Smoke Day” for schools (i.e., no school that day), possibly based on school environment and travel considerations - Consider canceling public events, based on public health and travel considerations
Very Unhealthy	301 - 500	1 – 1.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider closing some or all schools (However, newer schools with a central air cleaning filter may be more protective than older, leakier homes. See “Closures”, below) - Cancel outdoor events (e.g., concerts and competitive sports)
Hazardous	> 500	< 0.75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close Schools - Cancel outdoor events (e.g., concerts and competitive sports) - Consider closing workplaces not essential to public health - If PM level projected to continue to remain high for a prolonged time, consider evacuation of sensitive populations

Appendix V:
Model Health Alerts

Examples of Health Alerts for
Air Pollution Emergencies

Sacramento County Public Health Officer and SMAQMD APCO issue joint Health Advisory



Countywide Services Agency
Department of
Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health
Glennah Trochet, M.D.
County Health Officer

Terry Schulten, County Executive
Pamela Clark, Agency Administrator
Lynn Frank, Director

County of Sacramento

March 16, 2007

For Immediate Release as of 10:00 a.m.

Contacts: Sacramento County Public Health, (916) 875-5881
Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District Communications Office (916) 874-4888.

Smoke Related Cautionary Health Statement

Sacramento County Health Officer, Glennah Trochet M.D., in consultation with the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District is issuing this special health advisory due to the Union Pacific train freestyle fire in the CAL EXPO area.

If you see or smell smoke, restrict your outside activities. Until the smoke conditions improve, individuals should consider taking the following actions:

- o Everyone should avoid outdoor activities if you can see or smell smoke, even if you are healthy.
- o If you are in an area where you can smell smoke, stay indoors with doors and windows closed as much as possible.
- o The elderly, the very young and people with respiratory illnesses should be particularly careful to avoid exposure to the smoke.
- o Asthmatics should follow their asthma management plan.
- o Contact your doctor if you have symptoms of cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms you believe to be caused by the smoke.
- o Stay away from the scene of the fire.

Due to changing wind patterns, areas that are not experiencing smoke now may be impacted later. If the public would like more information, please call the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District's Communications Office at (916) 874-4848 or Sacramento County Public Health at (916) 875-5881.



Public Health
Home

2007/2006/2005/2004/2003/2002

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 - Vital Stats - Birth & Death
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 - Warnings
 - Public Health
 - Preparedness
 - Bioterrorism
 - Planning
 - Communicable Diseases
 - Health Care
 - Provider Info
 - What's New



El Dorado County PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Gayle Erbe-Hanlon, Director Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, Health Officer
931 Spring Street, Placerville, CA 95667 (530) 621-6156 FAX (530) 626-4713

Healthy People Living in Healthy Communities Throughout El Dorado County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 2007
11:20 a.m.

CONTACT:

Kristine Oase
(530) 621-6172

Health Advisory Issued Due To Wildfire Smoke Outdoor Activities in the City of South Lake Tahoe Should be Cancelled until Further Notice [.pdf]

All outdoor gatherings and sporting events in and around the City of South Lake Tahoe are recommended to be cancelled until further notice, according to the El Dorado County Health Officer. Businesses that provide non-essential services in the Y-area of South Lake Tahoe have also been asked to close voluntarily while smoke remains at hazardous levels in that part of the city due to the nearby Angora fire.

These closures are part of a health advisory issued today by the El Dorado County Air Quality Management District and the El Dorado County Public Health Department.

The El Dorado County Public Health Officer, Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, M.D., said that smoke generated by the Angora fire can pose significant risks to health. As of Monday morning, air quality in South Lake Tahoe ranges from very unhealthy to hazardous.

"Residents with lung or heart disease, and the elderly are advised to leave areas where levels of particulate matter are high. For everyone else, when you smell smoke, or see smoke around you, you should consider staying indoors and avoiding heavy exertion," Dr. Eberhart-Phillips said.

According to the Air Quality Management District, the following index will assist in assessing the air quality based on the visibility in your area. To assess visibility:

- Face away from the sun. Determine visibility range by looking for targets that are at known distances (miles).
- The visible range is the point where even high-contrast objects disappear.

- After determining visibility in miles use the following Wildfire Smoke Visibility Index to assess air quality.

Visibility Range	Health Category	Health Effects*
10+ miles	Good	None
5 - 10 miles	Moderate	Usually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.
3 - 5 miles	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Sensitive people should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.
1.5 - 2.5 miles	Unhealthy	Sensitive people should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.
1 - 1.25 miles	Very Unhealthy	Very Unhealthy Sensitive people should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.
< 0.75 miles	Hazardous	Sensitive people should remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Everyone else should avoid all physical activity outdoors.

In addition, residents who see or smell smoke should consider these precautionary measures:

- Healthy people should delay strenuous exercise, particularly when they can smell smoke.
- Children and elderly people should consider avoiding outdoor activities, particularly prolonged outdoor exertion. Parents of children involved in youth sports programs should consider whether their children be allowed to participate when smoke is in the air.
- People with health-related illnesses, particularly respiratory problems, should remain indoors.
- Keep windows and doors closed as much as possible. Use the recycle or re-circulate mode on the air conditioner in your home or car.
- Avoid the use of non-HEPA paper face mask filters which are not capable of filtering extra fine particles.
- Keep airways moist by drinking lots of water. Breathing through a warm, wet washcloth can also help relieve dryness.
- Avoid the fire areas.

While all persons may experience varying degrees of symptoms, more sensitive individuals, such as the young, aged and those with respiratory conditions are at greatest risk of experiencing more aggravated symptoms. Symptoms may include, but are not limited to, coughing, watery and itchy eyes, and difficulty breathing. Persons experiencing questionable or severe symptoms should seek professional medical advice and treatment. "Contact your doctor if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue," said Dr. Eberhart-Phillips.

County officials will continue to monitor air quality in South Lake Tahoe and provide updates on this advisory as needed.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 10, 2007

Public Health Contacts:

Michele Mickiewicz, Public Information Officer, 805-681-5446 or 805-451-3497 (cell)
Elliot Schulman, MD, MPH, Public Health Department Director, County Health Officer,
805-681-5105

APCD Contacts:

Terry Dressler, APCD Director. 805-961-8853
Bobbie Bratz, APCD Public Information Officer, 805-455-6403 (cell)

**Health Advisory Continues:
Expectation of Increased Smoke and Ash**

Santa Barbara, CA —There is an expectation of increased smoke and ash over the weekend from the Zaca Fire and the related burning operations being undertaken to control the blaze. As a result, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department and the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) remind residents that a health advisory is in place for people living in areas affected by smoke from the Zaca Fire.

Everyone, especially people with heart or lung disease (including asthma), older adults and children should limit time spent outdoors and limit prolonged or heavy exertion when the smell of smoke is present. If you have symptoms of lung or heart disease that may be related to excess smoke exposure, including repeated coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, nausea or unusual fatigue or lightheadedness, contact your health care provider.

This health advisory is in effect indefinitely and may be revised as conditions warrant. See attached for additional information, and check <http://www.OurAir.org> for updates on smoke advisories, and links to additional information on the fire incident.

###



COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
105 E. Anapamu St., Room 406 • Santa Barbara, CA 93101
www.countyofsb.org
(805) 568-3400 • FAX (805) 568-3414

PRESS RELEASE

News Media Contact:
EOC News Media Line—(805) 696-1161
Terri Maus-Nisich
Assistant County Executive Officer
OR
William Boyer
Communications Director
(805) 896-1056 (cell)
wboyer@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

ZACA-071607-014
August 7, 2007 -- TIME: 7:30 p.m.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public's help needed for Vulnerable Population notifications & assistance

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is asking for the public's help to gather information about the County's vulnerable population in the event of a possible evacuation due to the Zaca Fire.

As a precautionary measure, each individual or family should have an evacuation plan. The Public Health Department is in the process of identifying individuals with special needs who may be unable to evacuate without assistance and those who use medical equipment that require electricity.

If you have special physical and/or health needs and require assistance for a possible evacuation or you use life-sustaining medical equipment that requires electricity, please call (805) 968-0462 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. starting Wednesday, August 8.

Please be prepared to provide the following information, including your name, address, telephone number and specific information on your specific special needs.

As a reminder for all residents, planning for an evacuation includes:

- Staying up to date with road closures in your area and evacuation procedures from local authorities;
- Staying up to date with local shelter locations broadcast on radio and television;
- Packing essential items to take with you (including medications).

For more information on disaster planning and supply lists, please visit the FEMA website at:
<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/index.shtml>.

For regular updates about the Zaca Fire, the public can tune to the County's government cable TV station, Channel 20, or the government TV stations for the City of Santa Barbara, Channel 18, or the City of Goleta at Channel 19. In addition, the public can tune to the following radio stations.

AM Stations: KTMS-990; KZSB-1290; KUHL-1410 and KINF-1440. FM Stations: KCSB-91.9; KSPE-94.5 (Spanish); KSYV-96.7; KTYD-99.9; KSBL-101.7; KRAZ-105.9 and KIST-107.7.

In addition, motorists and residents in the San Marcos Pass area off Highway 154 can listen to AM 1040 (WQFI350) for updated emergency information. For specific updates on the Zaca Fire, the public can call the Zaca Fire Public Information Line at (805) 961-5770 or go online to www.inciweb.org or www.countyofsb.org or www.sbcfire.com.

El publico puede llamar a la linea de informacion de Zaca Fire al (805) 961-5770 para mas detalles o puede ir al WEB www.inciweb.org o www.countyofsb.org o www.sbcfire.com. El publico tambien puede escuchar noticias por radio. AM KTMS-990; KZSB-1290; KTYD-99.9; KSBL-101.7; KRAZ-105.9 y KIST-107.7. Los motoristas y residents de San Marcos Pass en la area del Camino 154 pueden escuchar la estacion AM 1040 (WQFI350) para nueva informacion de la emergencia.

Appendix B



News Release

For Immediate Release: July 19, 2001

(01-75)

Contacts:	Denise LaFlamme, Environmental Health Assessment	360-236-3174
	Kate Lynch, Communications Office	360-236-4078
	Lori Albert, Okanogan Health Department	509-422-7156

**Smoke from forest fires can create problems for asthmatics,
others with chronic diseases**

OLYMPIA — An early forest fire season and predictions for a drier-than-normal summer can mean trouble for asthmatics and others with chronic lung or heart diseases. Forest fires present health risks for everyone, especially people with lung or heart diseases, whose health can be seriously affected by smoke.

The Okanogan County Health District, where the Thirtymile Fire still continues to burn, has been monitoring smoke in the county, and issued a health warning last week. "We found that air pollution levels from the fire changed radically within hours, depending on weather conditions," said Lori Albert, a health administrator for Okanogan County. "We have been urging residents who have respiratory or heart conditions to take precautions when smoke is present." She added that "so far, remarkably, we have experienced few problems related to smoke in populated areas because of the direction of the wind."

The Department of Health reminds people with asthma to develop an asthma management plan with their physicians. An asthma management plan involves tracking symptoms to determine when to use additional medications or seek further medical treatment. National Institutes of Health has comprehensive information on managing asthma on their Web site:

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/index.htm> Those with other lung diseases or infections should contact their physicians to learn how to avoid serious complications that may result from forest fires.

Often people who have not been previously diagnosed with lung or heart disease may begin having problems in smoky conditions. Symptoms of potential lung and/or heart problems include chest tightness, chest pain, shortness of breath, or sudden, overwhelming fatigue.

Be prepared: People with asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, and other lung diseases should make sure they are on medication and have at least a five-day supply on hand at all times through fire season. Talk to your doctor about an asthma management plan and stick to it during unusually smoky conditions. Listen for radio and television messages about fires in your area. Keep a supply of non-perishable groceries on hand, especially foods that do not require cooking. In the event of a wildfire, stay indoors and limit your activity. Check for a “recirculation” function on your furnace or air conditioner. If smoke is present, it will be easier to breathe indoors if air is recirculating instead of drawing smoky air from outdoors.

What to do if there is smoke present:

- Stay inside with windows and doors shut.
- Use the recycle or re-circulate mode on the air conditioner in your home or car.
- Avoid cooking and vacuuming, which can increase pollutants indoors.
- Avoid physical exertion.
- Asthmatics should follow their asthma management plan.
- Keep at least a five-day supply of medication on hand.
- Contact your doctor if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue. This is important for not only for people with chronic lung or heart disease, but also for individuals who have not been previously diagnosed with such illnesses. Smoke can “unmask” or produce symptoms of such diseases.
- Keep airways moist by drinking lots of water. Breathing through a warm, wet washcloth can also help relieve dryness.
- A fitted mask (OSHA N95) can be used to reduce smoke exposure unless it interferes with breathing. A dust mask is generally ineffective with smoke.



Santa Barbara County
PUBLIC Health
DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
300 N. San Antonio Road • Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 681-5102 • FAX (805) 681-5191
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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Coping with Ash from the Zaca Fire

Ash from the Zaca Fire has affected various areas in Santa Barbara County and there will likely be episodes of ash fall for some time. While exposure to ash can cause irritation to the nose, throat and eyes, short-term exposure to ash generally does not constitute a significant health hazard for most people.

When ash fall is present, minimize time spent outdoors. While indoors, it helps to use an air conditioner, preferably with an air filter, especially if you have health problems, such as asthma, emphysema, other lung problems or heart conditions. People who don't have these health problems should use common sense and avoid exercising if the air is hazy and/or causes coughing or irritation. It's a good idea to keep doors, windows, and dampers closed to minimize the amount of ash that gets in the house. Here are some other things to consider¹ when dealing with large amounts of ash fall:

- Wash ash off of children's toys before children play with them.
- Clean ash off house pets.
- Wash fruits and vegetables from home gardens and fruit trees before eating them.
- Do not use leaf blowers or take other actions that will put ash into the air.
- Handle ash in open, well-ventilated areas, and wet the dust whenever possible to prevent its movement.
- Do not use shop vacuums or other common non-HEPA filter vacuum cleaners to clean up ash. These vacuums can exhaust small particles out into the air where they can be breathed in. HEPA filter vacuums should be used, if available.
- If you wear contact lenses, consider wearing eye glasses or use goggles for clean up projects.
- Use a well-fitting dust mask during clean-up. A mask rated N-95 or P-100 will be more effective than dust or surgical masks in blocking small particles from ash.
- Sweep indoor and outdoor hard surfaces gently, followed by wet mopping.
- Avoid washing ash into storm drains whenever possible.
- Avoid bare skin contact with ash as much as possible.
- Dispose of ash in the regular trash. Ash may be stored in plastic bags or other containers that will prevent it from being disturbed.