

## **News Release**

07-28-2010

For Immediate Release

**TO: Local News, Health and Weather sections**

### **Revised Wildfire Smoke Health Advisory**

Eastern Kern County residents are advised to restrict outdoor activities in areas impacted by smoke from wildfires

Smoke from the Bull wildfire near Kernville and the West wildfire near Tehachapi have impacted Eastern Kern communities from River Kern to Willow Springs. Communities in and adjacent to the Kern River Valley are expected to have smoke from the Bull wildfire at or near ground level for part of each day for the remainder of this week. Other areas of Eastern Kern County could be impacted by smoke from the Bull wildfire intermittently for the remainder of the week depending on wind patterns. Communities near Tehachapi may be heavily affected by smoke from the West wildfire until it is controlled.

The Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District is recommending that individuals reduce or suspend their normal outdoor activities whenever they smell smoke or can see smoke near ground level in their immediate area. Exposure and the ensuing health effects are dependent on the amount of time spent outside, and level of exertion. Children and older individuals should be especially careful when the threat of exposure to smoke is high. Those with pre-existing heart and lung problems should consider curtailing all activities in smoky conditions. Effects can be as mild as irritation of eye, nose and throat; and headache; or as serious as triggered asthma episodes or stresses on weakened cardiovascular systems.

If you plan to stay in a smoke impacted area, the best way to avoid the smoke is to stay indoors in an air conditioned building with windows and doors closed. Most residential central air conditioning systems re-circulate the air inside the home, so these can be operated normally; however, many commercial buildings and a small percentage of newer homes have mechanical ventilation systems that actively bring in outdoor air, and these should be set to a "re-circulate" mode, if available. If you are using a window air conditioner it should also be set to the "re-circulate" mode. Water or swamp coolers remove only a small portion of the smoke particles from the air that they bring in and provide little protection from the smoke. Whole house fans should not be used until the threat of smoke impacts in your area is gone.

You should consider leaving a smoke impacted area or moving to a designated emergency shelter, if you are in a "high-risk health" group or if you cannot find adequate shelter from the smoke.

For more information, call the Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District Office at (661) 862-5250.

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