Preparing for Wildfires
During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Wildfire smoke can irritate your lungs, cause inflammation, affect your immune system, and make you more prone to lung infections, including SARS-CoV-2, the virus that cause COVID-19. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, preparing and responding to wildfires will be different this year. Know how wildfire smoke can affect you and your loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic and what you can do to protect yourselves.

Use the following eight (8) key points to prepare for Wildfires during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To navigate this document click on the links on the next page to take you to more information and guidance. Click on the lightbulb on each section to return to the main menu.

8 Actions You Can Take
to Prepare and Respond to a Wildfire Emergency

- [1. Prepare.](#)

- [2. Take actions to protect yourself from wildfire smoke during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

- [3. Create a cleaner air space at home to protect yourself from wildfire smoke during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

- [4. Know the difference between symptoms from smoke exposure and COVID-19.](#)

- [5. Know whether you are at risk from wildfire smoke during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

- [6. Know what to do if you must evacuate.](#)

- [7. Important Reminders.](#)

- [8. Stay informed - Learn where to find local information about air quality, wildfires and COVID-19.](#)

*Reminder: To navigate this document click on the links above to take you to more information and guidance. Click on the lightbulb on each page to return to the main menu.

Prepare

◦ [Prepare for the wildfire smoke season](#) as you would in any other summer.

◦ Talk with a healthcare provider. Plan how you will protect yourself against wildfire smoke.

◦ Store a 7 to 10-day supply of prescription medicines in a waterproof, childproof container to take with you if you evacuate.

◦ Consider developing [a family disaster plan](#).

Take Actions to Protect Yourself
from Wildfire Smoke during the COVID-19 Pandemic

◦ Reduce your exposure to wildfire smoke.

◦ Limit your outdoor exercise when it is smoky outside or choose lower-intensity activities to reduce your smoke exposure.

◦ Keep in mind that while social distancing guidelines are in place, finding cleaner air might be harder if public facilities such as libraries, community centers, and shopping malls are closed or have limited their capacity.

Create a Cleaner Air Space
at Home to Protect Yourself from Wildfire Smoke during the COVID-19 Pandemic

◦ Use a portable air cleaner in one or more rooms. Portable air cleaners work best when run continuously with doors and windows closed.

◦ During periods of extreme heat, pay attention to temperature forecasts and know how to stay safe in the heat.

◦ Whenever you can, use air conditioners, heat pumps, fans, and window shades to keep your cleaner air space comfortably cool on hot days.

◦ If you have a forced air system, speak with a qualified HVAC professional about different filters (HEPA or MERV-13 or higher) and settings ("Recirculate" and "On" rather than "Auto") you can use to reduce indoor smoke.

◦ Avoid activities that create more indoor and outdoor air pollution, such as frying foods, sweeping, vacuuming, and using gas-powered appliances.

Know the Difference
between Symptoms of Smoke Exposure and COVID-19

◦ Some symptoms, like dry cough, sore throat, and difficulty breathing can be caused by both wildfire smoke exposure and COVID-19.

◦ Symptoms like **fever** or **chills**, **muscle or body aches**, and **diarrhea** are **not related to smoke exposure**. Learn about symptoms of COVID-19. The CDC COVID-19 Self-Checker can help you determine whether you need further assessment or testing for COVID-19.

◦ If you have questions after using the CDC COVID-19 Self-Checker, contact your healthcare provider.

If you have severe symptoms, like difficulty breathing or chest pain, immediately call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest hospital.

Know Whether You are at Risk
from Wildfire Smoke during the COVID-19 Pandemic

◦ Some people are more at risk of harmful health effects from <u>wildfire smoke</u> than others. Those most at risk include:

◦ Children less than 18 years old

◦ Adults aged 65 years or older

◦ Pregnant women

◦ People with chronic health conditions such as heart or lung disease, asthma, and diabetes

◦ Outdoor workers

◦ People who have lower socioeconomic status, including individuals experiencing homelessness or those who have limited access to medical care

◦ People who are immunocompromised or taking drugs that suppress the immune system

Know What to Do
if You Must Evacuate

◦ Pay attention to local guidance about updated plans for evacuations and shelters, including potential shelters for your pets.

◦ Whether you decide to evacuate or are asked to evacuate by state or local authorities, evacuate safely.

◦ If you check on neighbors and friends before evacuating, be sure to follow social distancing recommendations (staying at least 6 feet from others).

◦ If you need to go to a disaster shelter, follow CDC recommendations for staying safe and healthy in a public disaster shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to follow COVID-19 protocols (wash hands, wear a mask, watch your distance).

Important Reminders

Masks will not protect you from wildfire smoke.

◦ Masks that are used to slow the spread of COVID-19 offer little protection against wildfire smoke. They do not catch small, harmful particles in smoke that can harm your health. Although N95 respirators do provide protection from wildfire smoke, they might be in short supply as frontline healthcare workers use them during the pandemic. Please note, N95 masks are not appropriate for use in children.

People with COVID-19 are at increased risk from wildfire smoke during the pandemic.

◦ People who currently have or who are recovering from COVID-19 may be at increased risk of health effects from exposure to wildfire smoke due to compromised heart and/or lung function related to COVID-19.

Stay Informed

◦ Learn where to find local information about air quality, wildfires and COVID-19.

◦ Use the Air Quality Index (AQI) to check the air quality in your area.

◦ More CDC Resources: https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/covid-19/wildfire_smoke_covid-19.html

◦ Local Resources:

  ◦ **COVID-19 information**: Countyofnapa.org/coronavirus

  ◦ **Resources and support**: Readynapacounty.org

  ◦ **County Information Line**: 707-253-4540

  ◦ **CALFIRE information line**: 707-967-4207

  ◦ **Nixle Alerts**: Text zip code to 888-777

  ◦ **Weather alerts**: flexalert.org