



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DEP Declares Code Red Air Quality Action Day for Fine Particulate Matter for June 29, 2023 for entire state of Pennsylvania

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has declared a **Code Red Air Quality Action Day** for all of Pennsylvania for fine particulate matter for June 29, 2023, due to smoke from Canadian wildfires.

The average Air Quality Index readings for the entire day will likely be in the **Code Red** range, however local conditions could be **Code Purple** throughout the day. Residents are encouraged to check www.airnow.gov for their local conditions.

On a **Code Red** Air Quality Action Day, young children, the elderly, and those with respiratory problems, such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis, are especially vulnerable to the effects of air pollution and should avoid outdoor activities, and everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.

In **Code Purple** conditions, young children, the elderly, and those with respiratory problems should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.

Check current local conditions at www.airnow.gov.

Concentrations of smoke will likely be high throughout the day in western Pennsylvania and increasing throughout the day in eastern Pennsylvania.

Smoke due to wildfires in eastern Canada will likely contribute to daily average concentrations of fine particulate matter in the **Code Red** range. Residents are encouraged to check www.airnow.gov for current conditions in their area.

Smoke from the wildfires is expected to impact Pennsylvania air quality throughout Thursday and Friday, with some possible relief on Saturday. DEP will continue to update the forecast.

Conditions will likely be worse in the morning as a natural weather phenomenon called an atmospheric inversion will keep smoke filled air closer to the surface and prevent air from higher elevations to mix with air closer to the ground. Residents are encouraged to check www.airnow.gov for current conditions in their area.

Fine particulate matter (or PM-2.5) comes in many sizes and shapes and can be made up of hundreds of different chemicals. Some are emitted directly from a source, such as construction sites, unpaved roads, fields, smokestacks, or fires. Most particles form in the atmosphere as a

result of complex reactions of chemicals such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides (called “precursors”), which are pollutants emitted from power plants, industries, and automobiles.

Residents and businesses within the Air Quality Action Day areas are strongly encouraged to voluntarily help reduce fine particulate matter air pollution by:

- Avoiding the open burning of leaves, trash, and other materials; and
- Avoiding the use of gas-powered lawn and garden equipment.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health also has [recommendations on how to protect yourself from air pollution](#).

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Air Quality Index (AQI) provides standardized color codes for forecasting and reporting daily air quality. Green signifies good air quality; Yellow means moderate air quality; Orange represents unhealthy pollution levels for sensitive groups of people; and Red warns of unhealthy pollution levels for all. An Air Quality Action Day is declared when the AQI is forecasted to be Code Orange or higher.

For more information, visit DEP at www.ahs.dep.pa.gov/AQPartnersWeb, EPA’s AirNow at www.airnow.gov.

For more information on the [Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, please visit the website](#) or follow DEP on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

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