

Wildfire Preparedness

Every year, wildfires burn across the United States, and more and more people are living where wildfires are a real risk. California has had over hundreds of thousands of acres burned due to wildfires in recent years. As we approach drier weather, it is important to recognize if your school sites are in a potential wildfire area or if your sites could be affected by airborne health hazards. Below are some guidelines to consider as we approach this upcoming wildfire season:

Update the District's Emergency Action Plan:

- ❖ Ensure that Emergency Action Plans are up to date and includes procedures to monitor wildfires and monitor air quality.

Monitor Air Quality:

- ❖ www.AirNow.gov is a resource maintained and operated by government agencies that tracks and monitors regional air quality. It uses tools that are regularly monitored for quality control by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- ❖ Although AirNow is relied on by many jurisdictions, please consult with your local air district about resources school districts can use that will best represent local air quality.



How to Maintain Cleaner Air at School:

- ❖ Install and maintain HVAC air conditioning system with medium or high-efficiency filtration. If possible, install high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters.
- ❖ Where possible, install portable HEPA filters in classrooms. Be sure that portable filters are sized correctly for the room.
- ❖ Doors and windows should be sealed tightly and seek to minimize air movement in and out of room.

Should Masks be Worn:

- ❖ When air is unhealthy, the best option is to reduce physical activity and stay indoors with windows/doors closed
- ❖ If outdoor air quality unhealthful, seek a location with clean filtered air such as classrooms, library, cafeteria or other building with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system filtration.
- ❖ Masks have limitations and can exacerbate breathing conditions if not worn and maintained properly; additionally, masks are not intended for use by children. Thus, masks are not recommended for children by air quality districts/public health agencies. For employees, masks that filter harmful particulate matter are deemed respirators and should only be worn in compliance with the District's respiratory protection plan.

For More Information:

- ❖ See ASCIP Risk Alert [Wild Fires and District Risk](#) for tips on being prepared for wildfires.