

Protection from Wildfire Smoke

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Issuing Authority: Chief Probation Officer	

316.1 ATTACHMENT:

See attachment: [Protection-from-Wildfire-Smoke_\(Lexipol 11_2025\).pdf](#)

Attachments

Protection-from-Wildfire-Smoke_(Lexipol 11_2025).pdf












Protection from Wildfire Smoke

Probation
Department

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SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Scope

This program specifies safe work practices when the air quality equals or exceeds the Air Quality Index (AQI) of 151, for particulate matter of 2.5 micrometers (PM2.5) or greater, due to wildfire smoke. This program applies to employees exposed to such conditions for greater than one (1) cumulative hour per work shift.

Exemptions

- A. Enclosed buildings or structures in which the air is filtered by a mechanical ventilation system and the department ensures that windows, doors, bays, and other openings are kept closed to minimize contamination by outdoor or unfiltered air.
- B. Enclosed vehicles and heavy equipment in which the air is filtered by a cabin air filter and the department ensures that windows, doors, and other openings are kept closed to minimize contamination by outdoor or unfiltered air.
- C. Firefighters engaged in wildland firefighting.

Note: Worksites covered by this policy are to include any site where it can be reasonably anticipated that employees may be exposed to wildfire smoke.

Responsibilities

- A. **Directors, Deputy Directors, and/ or Managers shall:**
 - 1) Ensure the elements of this program are followed by all affected employees, interns, volunteers, and other applicable staff.
 - 2) Ensure employees are provided with the necessary resources to safely implement this program.
 - 3) Ensure all departmental job classifications and tasks affected by this program are identified.
 - 4) Ensure periodic audits and inspections of the workplace are conducted to maintain compliance with this and all other departmental safety programs.
- B. **Supervisors, and/ or Department Designees shall:**
 - 1) Ensure training is provided for all affected employees under their supervision.
 - 2) Maintain accurate training records.
 - 3) Ensure effective two-way communication exists between employees and supervision.

- 4) Ensure adequate supplies of approved particulate respirators are readily available at the worksite.
- 5) Periodically monitor the AQI when the index is equal to or exceeds 151 and ensure this information is effectively communicated in a form readily understandable to all employees.
- 6) Monitor employee exposure to an AQI of 151 or greater during their work shift.
- 7) Ensure employees have access to prompt medical care whenever a work-related injury occurs.

C. Employees shall:

- 1) Follow the procedures and safe work practices listed in this program/ training.
- 2) Inform their supervisor if they notice air quality is getting worse, or if they are suffering symptoms due to poor air quality from wildfire smoke.
- 3) Attend safety training on the application of this program and inform their supervisors if they do not understand any of the provisions herein.
- 4) As applicable, inform their supervisor if they are aware of an AQI of 151 or higher.
- 5) As necessary, follow the information within department specific programs, policies, and procedures.



DEFINITIONS

Air Quality Index: The method used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to report air quality on a real-time basis. The AQI is divided into six categories as shown in the table below, adapted from Table 2 of Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 58 Appendix G.

Air Quality Index (AQI) for Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 Microns in Diameter or less	Levels of Health Concern
0 to 50	<u>Good</u>
51 to 100	<u>Moderate</u>
101 to 150	<u>Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups</u>
151 to 200	<u>Unhealthy</u>
201 to 300	<u>Very Unhealthy</u>
301 to 500	<u>Hazardous</u>
Note: 1 Micron = 1/25,000 th inch	

NIOSH approved respirators: The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health or NIOSH is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in the Department of Health and Human Services. NIOSH evaluates and approves respirators for use in the workplace.

Filtering Facepiece Respirators (FFR) used for wildfire smoke protection are required to have NIOSH approval. Filtering Facepiece Respirators with N95 particulate filters are the minimum level of protection required for wildfire smoke. In addition to N class respirators, R and P class units with efficiency ratings of 95, 99, and 100 are also acceptable under NIOSH guidelines; however, unless otherwise approved, N95 respirators are the only devices allowed by the County for Voluntary Use when an employee is affected by wildfire smoke.

Filtering Facepiece Respirators must be replaced at least every work shift, or sooner if the respirator becomes damaged, soiled, or breathing becomes difficult. An adequate supply of FFRs shall be made readily available at each affected worksite when necessary.

NIOSH Link: [NIOSH Personal Protective Equipment](#) | [Personal Protective Equipment](#) | [CDC](#)

Particulate Matter (PM 2.5): Solid particles and liquid droplets suspended in air, known as Particulate Matter (PM), with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 micrometers or smaller.

Wildfire Smoke: Emissions from fires in wildlands; i.e., sparsely populated areas covered primarily by grass, brush, trees, crops, or a combination thereof.



Identification, Communication, and Training

The following operations in our department are likely to have exposure to wildfire smoke:

Field work, Juvenile Institutions-outside activities

If employees may be exposed to wildfire smoke, then our department will take the following actions:

- **Monitoring the AQI**

The Safety and Security Unit (SSU) will routinely monitor the current for PM2.5 for the applicable worksite(s). The AQI for the San Bernardino valley worksites will be found on AQMD.gov. The worksite zip code will be entered to obtain the current AQI.

The AQI for the desert regions will be obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at www.AirNow.gov.

- **Communication to Employees**

Safety and Security Unit (SSU) will communicate the current AQI to employees using a variety of tools including, but not limited to email, text message, phone call, and/ or two-way radio.

- **Wildfire Smoke Training**

Performance Education Resource Center (PERC) [Performance, Education & Resource Centers](#) will ensure employees are trained on health effects of wildfire smoke and the department's procedures to control exposure. (*See Appendices A through D training handouts*).



Hierarchy of Controls and Respirator Usage

Control of employee exposures

The Probation Department will refer to the *Air Quality Index Response Matrix* in Appendix B as a guide, and implement a combination of engineering, administrative, and personal protective equipment (PPE) control options when no single method fully protects workers.

The Probation Department will use the following control measures to protect employees from wildfire smoke:

Probation CCB Staff will be notified to stop conducting outside field work and return to their respective offices when the AQI is 151 or greater, and outdoor activities will be put on hold until air quality improves and the AQI drops below 151.

Probation DCB Staff will be notified to stop conducting outside activities with youth and remain inside when the AQI is 151 or greater, and outdoor activities will be put on hold until air quality improves and the AQI drops below 151.

Personal Protective Equipment

When Probation Department employees must remain working outdoors or in unfiltered air for greater than one hour during their shift, and engineering or administrative controls are not feasible then they will be provided with a N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators (FFR) for their voluntary use. Respiratory protection can be found and replenished by the Safety and Security Unit.

Supervisors and Directors shall encourage employees to use N95 respirators where the current AQI for PM2.5 is equal to or greater than 151 but does not exceed 500 for the area where they are working.

Note: For voluntary use of filtering facepiece respirators, such as N95 particulate respirators, fit testing, and medical evaluations will not be required.

The Safety and Security Unit shall ensure that any employee given a respirator shall be trained on proper usage, cleaning, and maintenance of that respirator, and document the training on the *Voluntary Use of Filtering Facepiece Respiratory Acknowledgement Form* in Appendix D.

Where the current AQI for PM2.5 exceeds 500, a higher level of respirator use is required in accordance with Title 8 CCR, §5144, and the County's Respiratory Protection Program. Respirators with an Assigned Protection Factor (APF) of greater than 10 (e.g., Full Face Respirator, PAPR, SCBA) are mandatory and require medical clearance, training, and fit testing (See *Appendices for more information*).



Recordkeeping

Medical records will be retained at the Center for Employee Health and Wellness.

Voluntary Use of Filtering Facepiece Respiratory Acknowledgement Forms, Respiratory Fit Testing, and Training records will be retained per the department retention schedule with the Safety and Security Unit.

REFERENCES/RESOURCE MATERIALS

California Code of Regulations Title 8, section 5141.1 (Effective 7/29/19)

[Appendix A – Wildfire Smoke Protection Training Handout](#)

[Appendix B – Wildfire Smoke Air Quality Index Response Matrix](#)

[Appendix C – Proper Use of Filtering Facepiece Respirator](#)

[Appendix D– Voluntary Use of Filtering Facepiece Respiratory Acknowledgement Form](#)