



# Okanogan County Public Health

<http://www.okanogancounty.org/ochd/index.htm>

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Based on information from the Dept. of Ecology's Air Quality Monitoring Index and information received from the US Forest Service, the air quality in Okanogan County is presently at an unhealthy level for sensitive people, especially in the areas of Winthrop, Conconully and Loomis. According to information from the US Forest Service, smoke from the Tripod Fire has been reaching extremely unhealthy levels at times, especially in the areas of Winthrop and Loomis and this situation is expected to continue for the coming week. Highest hourly readings noted on the some key air quality monitors have been as follows: 1,200 at 8-Mile fire camp, 900 at Loomis 250 at Omak, and 160 at Winthrop. These numbers are the period of record hourly readings for this wildfire event at these locations. Highs also measured 137 at Twisp, 100 at Okanogan. As a point of reference, the "Unhealthy" range is 176-300 for an hourly concentration. Average 24 hour daily concentrations were 300 at 8-Mile, 370 at Loomis, 45 at both Okanogan and Conconully, 42 at Omak, 37 at Winthrop, and 36 at Twisp. A point of reference for these 24 hour averages is that 40-65 is considered "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" and 65-150 is "Unhealthy" for the population in general,

Based on recent patterns, we expect morning hours, generally from 7:00 am to noon to be the worst in the affected areas, with conditions improving in the afternoon. However, depending on weather and fire activity, there may be days when the worst areas experience only short periods of relief from unhealthy smoke conditions, with heavy smoke persisting through most of a 24 hour period. People, **especially** people more sensitive to smoke, are strongly advised to protect themselves during periods of thick smoke as follows.

- Stay inside and keep the windows and doors closed.
- Use the recycle or recirculate mode on the air conditioner in your home or car.
- If you do not have air conditioning and temperatures are high, staying indoors with the windows closed may be dangerous in extremely hot weather. At such times, consider leaving the area or staying with friends or family who live elsewhere.
- Avoid using anything indoors that burns, including wood stoves and gas cook stoves and candles.
- Don't smoke: this puts more pollution in your lungs – and those of the people around you.
- Avoid physical exertion.
- Contact your health care provider if you have symptoms of cardiovascular or lung problems. If you cannot reach your health care provider call 9-1-1.

People more sensitive to smoke include

- infants and young children
- the elderly
- pregnant women
- cigarette smokers
- those with pre-existing lung and cardiovascular conditions (respiratory infection, asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema, a previous heart attack, angina, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, or stroke.
- diabetics

Information on the health effects of smoke is available at Okanogan County Public Health, (509) 422-7140. Information on current air quality conditions in Okanogan County can be found on the Dept. of Ecology website at <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/aqp/Public/databyarea.shtml> and information on the Tripod Fire, including air quality advisories, is being posted by the US Forest Service at the INCIWEB fire website at <http://inciweb.org>.