

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
Division of Air Quality**

SITUATION REPORT

**AIR QUALITY ADVISORY
Western Interior AK #2009-1**

LOCATION(S) IMPACTED: Kobuk Valley, Noatak Valley, Baldwin Peninsula and Selawik Valley, Seward Peninsula, Eastern Norton Sound and Nulato Hills, Koyukuk Valley, Yukon Valley, Upper Kuskokwim Valley.

TIME/DATE OF UPDATE: Tuesday, August 4, 5:00 PM.

VALID TIME: Valid August 4 at 5:00 PM until August 5 at 12:00 PM.

TIME/DATE OF THE NEXT REPORT: Wednesday, August 5, 12:00 PM.

ADVISORY: Several large fires in Interior Alaska are affecting air quality across the State. Smoke in the Western Interior has been reported as far north as Noatak, and as far west as Nome, with several observations in the interior areas. Smoky conditions are expected to continue through the evening and begin to clear out in some locations on Wednesday as a front moves inland. Overall air quality for the Western Interior will be predominantly **good to moderate**, with several areas reporting **unhealthy** air quality.

The forecast for the Western Interior is for cloudy skies and winds generally from the east/northeast for the rest of Tuesday. On Wednesday, the winds will begin to shift to be more from the south as a front approaches, which should allow smoke to clear out of coastal areas. This front brings with it chances for rain for much of the region. Areas further inland will see the wind shift to be more southerly as well, but smoke will likely still reach communities such as Galena and Kobuk.

Keep in mind that areas immediately downwind of any fire will experience **hazardous** levels of smoke. Generally, worse conditions occur overnight and during the early morning hours, as the atmosphere cools and brings smoke to the surface. During the day, surface heating will mix smoke and carry it upwards, temporarily improving air quality. Hot, dry weather will lead to extensive fire activity, dramatically increasing smoke production, and thus causing the worst visibilities to occur in the late afternoon and early evening hours.

SMOKE AND PUBLIC IMPACT: This is an area forecast, and as such is a general forecast for portions of Interior Alaska. Smoke intensity will vary depending on precise location and local wind flow patterns. Smoke concentrations will be such that they could impact public health at times. It is advised that travelers check local weather as smoke conditions may vary considerably from one locality to the next. The most recent weather observations may be found on National Weather Service's homepage at <http://pafc.arh.noaa.gov/obs.php>.

DEC advises anyone with respiratory illness or heart disease, the elderly, and children to avoid exposure to smoke. All others are cautioned to avoid outdoor activities or physical exertion when conditions reach unhealthy levels, as defined below:

The following table is the Air Quality Index for Particle Pollution.

| Index Values | Levels of Health Concern | Cautionary Statements |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 0-50 | Good | None |
| 51-100 | Moderate | Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion. |
| 101-150 | Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups | People with heart or lung disease, the elderly and children should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. |
| 151-200 | Unhealthy | People with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should avoid prolonged exertion; everyone else should limit prolonged exertion. |
| 201-300 | Very Unhealthy | People with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should avoid any outdoor activity; everyone else should avoid prolonged exertion. |
| Over 300 | Hazardous | Everyone should avoid any outdoor exertion; people with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should remain indoors. |

When air quality data is unavailable, the following **Air Quality Smoke Reference Guide** may be used to estimate air quality levels and potential health impacts:

| Visibility | Air Quality |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 10+ miles | Good |
| 6 - 9 miles | Moderate |
| 3 - 5 miles | Unhealthy for sensitive groups |
| 1.5 - 2.5 miles | Unhealthy |
| 0.9 - 1.4 miles | Very Unhealthy |
| 0.8 miles or less | Hazardous |

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For information on Wildfire Smoke from the Department of Health and Social Services, visit their website at <http://www.epi.alaska.gov/eh/wildfire/default.htm>.

For information on Wildfire Smoke from the Department of Environmental Conservation, Air Quality Division, visit the website at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/smokemain.htm>.

For information on road conditions around Alaska, visit the Road Traveler Information System at <http://511.alaska.gov/>.

For information on the Air Quality in Fairbanks, visit the Fairbanks North Star Borough at <http://co.fairbanks.ak.us/airquality/>.

For information on this advisory, contact Cindy Dettmer-Shea with the Division of Air Quality, at 907-269-7676.

NOTIFICATION LIST:

Baldwin Pen/Selawik Valley

Northwest Arctic Borough

Kotzebue

Selawik

Noorvik

North & Interior Seward Pen

Buckland

Deering

Candle

Council

Haycock

Pilgrim Springs

Serpentine Hot Spgs

Taylor

Southern Seward Peninsula

Nome

White Mountain

Golovin

King Island

Koyuk

Solomon

E Norton Sound/Nulato Hills (212)

Unalakleet

Stebbins

St Michael

Elim

Koyuk

Shaktoolik

Lower Yukon Valley

Grayling

Anvik

Shageluk

Flat

Holy Cross

Kako Landing

Russian Mission

Ohogamiut

Marshall

Lower Koyukuk/Middle

Yukon Valleys

Galena

Nulato

Huslia

Kaltag

Ruby

Koyukuk

Upper Kobuk/Noatak Valley

Northwest Arctic Borough

Ambler

Shungnak

Kobuk

Upper Kuskokwim Valley

McGrath

Takotna

Nikolai

Telida