



## *DEC News Release*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DEC Issues Fairbanks/Interior Alaska Air Quality Alert**

**June 28, 2004**— The Department of Environmental Conservation has classified smoke levels in the vicinity of Venetie, Fort Yukon and Fairbanks as **“very unhealthy to hazardous,”** and has issued an air quality alert.

Airborne levels of fine particulates (smoke) have increased significantly in Interior Alaska due to wildfire activity in the upper Yukon Valley and are exceeding federal air quality standards. These conditions are expected to persist over the next week.

**DEC advises everyone with respiratory illness or heart disease, the elderly and children, to avoid outside activity in Fairbanks and Interior Alaska areas affected by forest fire smoke. All others are cautioned to avoid outdoor exertion.**

Air quality levels in the vicinity of fires are estimated to be in the **unhealthy to hazardous** air quality range. Air Quality will improve with distance and upwind direction from the fire, but will remain unhealthy to hazardous in areas with smoke. Although conditions remain variable throughout the region, the smoke threat is expected to remain high for the next 5 to 7 days. Currently, smoke from the Solstice Complex and Boundary Fires is impacting Venetie, the upper Yukon Valley airshed, Fairbanks, and the Tanana Valley.

Air quality levels are being measured in Fairbanks, but are not currently monitored in the vicinity of the fire around Venetie. Particulate levels may be significantly higher or lower throughout the Region depending on proximity to the smoke. This air quality alert applies to any area of Interior Alaska north of the Alaska Range which may be impacted by smoke. Smoke from Alaskan fires is traveling as far south as Montana and Wyoming.

This alert will expire on Tuesday, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004, or sooner should it rain in the area and the smoke diminish. This advisory may be extended if fire activity persists.

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