



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CITY OF CHICAGO CONTINUES ACTIONS TO ADDRESS VERY UNHEALTHY AIR QUALITY DUE TO SMOKE FROM CANADIAN WILDFIRES

CHICAGO—Air quality conditions in Chicago were rated as “very unhealthy” for the second straight day on Wednesday due to smoke from wildfires in Canada, as the City of Chicago continued its response plan to protect vulnerable populations and urged all residents to take precautions. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) issued an updated Air Quality Alert in effect until midnight on Thursday forecasting “unhealthy” conditions statewide for today and “unhealthy conditions for sensitive groups” for Thursday, June 29th. The City will continue to monitor the status of this alert as the Air Quality Index continues to increase and conditions worsen throughout the day.

The alert includes recommendations that all Chicagoans - and particularly sensitive populations, including individuals with heart or lung disease, older adults, pregnant people, and young children - avoid outdoor activities and take precautions to protect themselves from exposure. The City is acting across departments and sister agencies to initiate a comprehensive response and ensuring that the needs of vulnerable populations are addressed. Special precautions include moving Chicago Park District camps, Chicago Public Schools and other public activities indoors where possible, and urging everyone to consider similar approaches.

For Chicagoans without access to properly ventilated and safe indoor conditions, please utilize our many public libraries, senior centers, Park District facilities, and the Cultural Center for respite. For specific location hours, residents may contact 3-1-1, or the six community service centers that operate from 9am-5pm:

- Englewood Center – 1140 W. 79th Street
- Garfield Center – 10 S. Kedzie Ave. (**24 Hours**)
- King Center – 4314 S. Cottage Grove
- North Area Center – 845 W. Wilson Ave.
- South Chicago Center – 8650 S. Commercial Ave.
- Trina Davila Center – 4312 W. North Ave.



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The City is also taking the following actions to minimize the impact, especially for its vulnerable populations:

- Alerting Chicago Housing Authority, delegate agency clients, Department of Family and Support Services Seniors, and Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities clients of the air quality situation and providing helpful safety information.
- Making PPE available to vulnerable residents through our street outreach teams and delegate agencies.
- Urging city employees to telework where possible.
- Urging the public and City departments to limit automobile use and refueling.
- Providing 3-1-1 with helpful air quality safety information.
- Utilizing the City's broad communication network, including digital assets, to share information with the public.
- Monitoring 9-1-1 call volume and hospital visits for respiratory related health emergencies.

"The alarming air quality readings over the course of the last two days prove that all Chicagoans must keep their guard up," **said Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "As these unsafe conditions persist, the City will continue to provide updates and will take swift action to ensure that vulnerable individuals have the information they need to protect themselves, their families, and check on their loved ones. Anyone who needs immediate medical attention should dial 911. My administration and I are keenly aware of the climate crisis's impact in this moment; vulnerable communities in Chicago bear a continuously heavier burden from climate exacerbated extreme weather. We must continue driving equitable and just solutions, reducing our emissions and building a more resilient city for all."

For the duration of the Air Quality Alert, Mayor Johnson is urging all Chicagoans to work in partnership to disseminate critical information and to encourage all individuals, including particularly sensitive populations to take precautions. These include:

- Avoid spending time outdoors. If you must go outside, keep outdoor activity short and wear a KN95 or N95 mask while outside.
- Stay indoors and keep your indoor air as clean as possible by not smoking, using candles, or vacuuming.
- Delay or reduce, and/or halt outdoor activities and events wherever possible.
- Follow your doctor's advice if you have asthma, lung or cardiovascular disease. Some symptoms of breathing smoke include wheezing, chest pain, shortness of breath, and trouble breathing. If your symptoms worsen, call your physician or 911.



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- Keep windows and doors closed and turn on your air conditioner if you have one.
- Seek shelter elsewhere if you do not have an air conditioner and your home is too warm.
- Use an air purifier if you have one.
- Limit driving a vehicle if possible.
- Stay tuned to local news media advisories.

To learn more about air quality in our area and monitor for updates from the US EPA, visit www.AirNow.gov. Residents can also sign up to receive NotifyChicago alerts at NotifyChicago.org or download the Chicago OEMC App through the Apple App or Google play stores for public safety tips and alerts.

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