



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Air Quality Update for San Luis Obispo County  
*Smoke Present but No Health Impacts at Presents***

San Luis Obispo – The Public Health Department and the Air Pollution Control District are working in partnership to assess air quality, to identify any potential health impacts and to inform the community about safeguarding individual health. At this time, San Luis Obispo County is largely experiencing visual impacts of smoke from the Thomas Fire to our south in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, and finds that the particulate matter is largely contained in the upper atmosphere. Conditions, however, are subject to change based on weather patterns, wind direction and progress of the fire.

County officials recommend that, if you smell smoke or see ash fall, take precautions and use common sense to reduce the harmful health effects associated with smoke exposure. When it is obvious that smoke is in the air, all adults and children should avoid strenuous outdoor activity and remain indoors as much as possible and set any heating/air conditioning/ventilation systems to recirculation. If staying indoors does not provide relief, temporarily leaving the area and going to a location where the smoke impacts are not significant is advised.

These precautions are especially important for people with existing respiratory illness and heart conditions, older adults and children as they are particularly vulnerable to the health effects of declining air quality. It is important for families with small children to be aware that even if adults in the household have no symptoms, children may be experiencing them due to their smaller body mass and developing lungs. If smoke impacts increase, healthy people could be affected as well. If a cough, shortness of breath, wheezing, exhaustion, light-headedness or chest pain occurs, outdoor activity should be stopped immediately, and the affected person should seek medical attention.

While N95 masks, also known as respirators, are being distributed in Santa Barbara County, such personal protection is not indicated for SLO County residents at present. N95 masks provide maximal protection only when fitted properly, based on use of a fit-test machine. Also, these masks are designed for adults, though may fit a child if their face is comparable in size to that of a petite adult. For

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individuals with asthma or other medical conditions who are considering use of a mask, they may want to consult their doctors first, as the mask can reduce airflow.

The SLO County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) closely monitors local air quality during wildfire events. The APCD has nine permanent air monitoring stations located throughout the county measuring air quality and collecting data 24-hours per day, 7-days per week. In addition, during wildfires and large controlled burns, the APCD sets up temporary air monitoring sites to closely monitor those areas that may be most impacted.

To stay tuned in to air quality conditions, people are recommended to check air quality reports at <http://www.slocleanair.org> and may sign-up for mobile alerts at <http://www.slocleanair.org/air-quality-alerts.php>

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