

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY

Protection from Wildfire Smoke Plan

The Claremont Colleges Services

01/13/25



THE
CLAREMONT
COLLEGES

SERVICES

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Purpose

This policy establishes procedures to protect employees, students, contractors, and visitors from exposure to harmful levels of wildfire smoke, in compliance with the California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5141.1. It applies to all outdoor activities where an individual is exposed to wildfire smoke for more than one hour and to indoor workplaces without mechanical ventilation when the Air Quality Index (AQI) for particulate matter (PM2.5) exceeds 151 due to wildfire smoke.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, students, contractors, and visitors who may be exposed to wildfire smoke during their outdoor activities for more than one hour or indoor activities where mechanical ventilation is not available on university or company property.

Exemptions

- ❖ Enclosed buildings or structures in which the air is filtered by a mechanical ventilation system and the employer ensures that windows, doors, bays, and other openings are kept closed, except when it is necessary to open doors to enter or exit.
- ❖ Enclosed vehicles in which the air is filtered by a cabin air filter and the employer ensures that windows, doors, and other openings are kept closed, except when it is necessary to open doors to enter or exit the vehicle.
- ❖ The employer demonstrates that the concentration of PM2.5 in the air does not exceed a concentration that corresponds to a current AQI of 151 or greater by measuring PM2.5 levels at the worksite in accordance with Appendix A.
- ❖ Employees exposed to a current AQI for PM2.5 of 151 or greater for a total of one hour or less during a shift.
- ❖ Firefighters engaged in wildland firefighting.

Definitions

- Wildfire Smoke: Emissions from wildfires containing harmful particulate matter (PM2.5).
- Air Quality Index (AQI): A standardized system for reporting air quality levels.
- PM2.5: Particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 microns or smaller that can penetrate deep into the lungs and cause health issues.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for TCCS' Plan implementation is vested primarily in the Executive Office, Risk Management/ Environmental Health and Safety and Human Resources Departments. In addition, all managers and supervisors are responsible for implementing and maintaining the Wildfire Smoke Prevention Plan in their assigned work areas and for ensuring workers receive answers to questions about the procedures in a language they understand.

All workers are responsible for using safe work practices; following all directives, policies, and procedures; and assisting in maintaining a safe work environment.

This plan is maintained at our worksite by the Environmental Health and Safety Department (EH&S) and can be accessed electronically at <https://services.claremont.edu/ehs/> . It is available to workers or their representatives upon request.

Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Responsibilities

- ❖ Monitor air quality conditions daily using reputable sources; <https://www.airnow.gov/>; <https://fire.airnow.gov/>; <https://www.enviroflash.info/>
- ❖ Provide training, equipment, and resources to comply with this policy; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJYGNDNZOkc&list=PL4OjzCjNowGMmwxMBp6twhhNYwn53TCE&index=2> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctQlwLPc81w&list=PL4OjzCjNowGMmwxMBp6twhhNYwn53TCE&index=3>
- ❖ Evaluate and update the policy annually or as required.

Supervisor (s) Responsibilities

- ❖ Monitor air quality conditions daily using reputable sources, <https://www.airnow.gov/>; <https://fire.airnow.gov/>; <https://www.enviroflash.info/>
- ❖ Communicate air quality updates to employees.
- ❖ Enforce protective measures, including the use of respirators and relocation of work when necessary.

Employees and Students Responsibilities

- ❖ Comply with all protective measures outlined in this policy.
- ❖ Report any symptoms of smoke-related illness to supervisors immediately.

Procedures

- ❖ Monitoring Air Quality
 - EH&S and Supervisors will monitor AQI levels daily, focusing on PM2.5 readings.
 - If AQI exceeds 151 due to wildfire smoke, protective measures will be implemented.

Protective Measures

TCCS will initiate protective measures to protect employees from PM2.5 when the current AQI for PM2.5 is 151 or greater. Examples of protective methods include:

- ❖ Relocating work to enclosed structures or vehicles where the air is filtered.
- ❖ Changing procedures such as moving workers to a place with a lower current AQI for PM2.5.
- ❖ Reducing work time in areas with unfiltered air.
- ❖ Increasing rest time and frequency and providing a rest area with filtered air.
- ❖ Reducing the physical intensity of the work to help lower the breathing and heart rates.
- ❖ Providing N-95 masks.

AQI Levels and Required Actions

Air Quality Index (AQI) Category for PM2.5	Levels Of Health Concern	Required Action
0 to 50	Good	No respirator required for healthy individuals
51 to 100	Moderate	No respirator required for healthy individuals; dust masks or N-95 masks recommended for sensitive groups.
101 to 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Dust masks or N-95 masks recommended for sensitive groups.
151 to 200	Unhealthy	N-95 recommended (voluntary)
201 to 300	Very Unhealthy	N-95 strongly recommended
301 to 500	Hazardous	N-95 required

Engineering Controls

- ❖ Use filtered air systems in indoor workspaces to reduce exposure.
- ❖ Install portable air purifiers where necessary.

Administrative Controls

- ❖ Modify work schedules to reduce outdoor activities during periods of poor air quality.
- ❖ Provide additional breaks to reduce exposure time.
- ❖ Rotate tasks to minimize exposure time.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Respirators can be an effective way to protect employee health by reducing exposure to wildfire smoke, when they are properly selected and worn. Respirator use can be beneficial even when the AQI for PM2.5 is less than 151, to provide additional protection.

When the current AQI for PM2.5 is 151 or greater, employers shall provide their employees with proper respirators for voluntary use. If the current AQI is greater than 500, respirator use is required, except in emergencies. TCCS ensure employees are protected from wildfire smoke through the following:

- ❖ Provide NIOSH-approved respirators (e.g., N95 masks) to employees.
- ❖ Train employees on proper use, fitting, and limitations of respirators.

*Respirators should be used properly and kept clean.

Communication

TCCS will use phone, text messages, email or two-way radio to alert employees when the air quality is harmful and what protective measures are available to employees.

TCCS encourages employees to inform their employers if they notice the air quality is getting worse, or if they are suffering from any symptoms due to the air quality, without fear of reprisal.

Training

TCCS will provide training to employees on the following topics:

- ❖ Health effects of wildfire smoke.
- ❖ How to use AQI to understand risk levels.
- ❖ Proper use and care of respirators.

Medical Management

Employees experiencing symptoms of smoke-related illness, such as coughing, shortness of breath, or dizziness, should report to their supervisor and seek medical evaluation if necessary.

Policy Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed and updated as required based on changes in regulations or worksite conditions.

This Protection from Wildfire Smoke Policy ensures compliance with California regulations and prioritizes the health and safety of all individuals on campus or at the workplace.