

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Health Contacts:

Michele Mickiewicz, Public Information Officer, 805-681-5446 or 805-451-3497 (cell)
Elliot Schulman, MD, MPH, Public Health Department Director, County Health Officer,
805-681-5105

APCD Contacts:

Tom Murphy, Division Manager, 805-403-1096 (cell)
Bobbie Bratz, Public Information Officer, 805-455-6403 (cell)

Update on Precautionary Smoke Advisory for Areas Impacted by the Zaca Fire

SANTA BARBARA, CA – The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department and the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) today reiterated a precautionary smoke advisory for people in areas affected by smoke from the Zaca Fire. The agencies noted that variable weather conditions and the eastward movement of the Zaca fire will likely change the areas of our community that are affected by smoke.

Air Pollution Control Officer Terry Dressler, said, "Many variables will determine how much smoke is in the air and where the smoke is located. The APCD recommends that residents in areas affected by smoke take appropriate actions to reduce their exposure."

If you smell smoke, be cautious and use common sense to protect your family's health. Everyone, especially people with heart or lung disease (including asthma), older adults and children should limit time spent outdoors, and limit prolonged or heavy exertion. If you have symptoms of lung or heart disease that may be related to excess smoke exposure, including repeated coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, nausea or unusual fatigue or lightheadedness, contact your health care provider.

Dr. Elliot Schulman, County Health Officer, said, "Smoke irritates the eyes, nose and throat. Because of this, people living in areas affected by heavy smoke should minimize their exposure by limiting sports and other outdoor activities. People with asthma or other respiratory diseases should contact their health care providers if their symptoms worsen."

With changing wind patterns, the extent of the fire, and burning operations undertaken by the fire agencies to control the fire, the possibility for smoke exposure is likely to change over the course of the fire. This precautionary advisory is in effect indefinitely and may be revised as conditions warrant. See attached for additional information, and check <http://www.OurAir.org> for updates on smoke advisories, and links to additional information on the fire incident.

How to Protect Your Family from Fires and the Harmful Effects of Smoke

- Check out the Santa Barbara County Fire Department website, <http://sbcfire.com> for information on assembling a disaster kit, establishing a “defensible space” directly around your home, and more.
- Check <http://www.OurAir.org>, for smoke advisories and updates. But also use common sense. If it smells smoky outside, it's not a good time for you or your children to exercise outdoors.
- If you are advised to stay indoors, keep indoor air as clean as possible. Keep your windows and doors closed — unless it's extremely hot outside. If you have an air conditioner, run it with the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean. Don't use fireplaces, gas logs, or candles, don't vacuum, and don't smoke.
- When smoke is heavy for a prolonged period of time, fine particles can build up indoors even though you may not be able to see them. If you have heart or lung disease, are an older adult, or have children, talk with your doctor about whether and when you should leave the area.
- Be sure to call your doctor if your symptoms worsen.

Health Effects of Smoke

Smoke is made up of a complex mixture of gases and fine particles produced when wood and other organic matter burn. The biggest health threat from smoke comes from fine particles. These microscopic particles can get into your eyes and respiratory system, where they can cause health problems such as burning eyes, runny nose, and can worsen illnesses such as bronchitis. Fine particles also can aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases – and even are linked to premature deaths in people with these conditions.

If you have heart or lung disease, such as congestive heart failure, angina, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, emphysema or asthma, you may experience health effects earlier and at lower smoke levels than healthy people.

Older adults are more likely to be affected by smoke, possibly because they are more likely to have heart or lung diseases than younger people. Children also are more susceptible to smoke for several reasons: their respiratory systems are still developing; they breathe more air (and air pollution) per pound of body weight than adults; and they're more likely to be active outdoors.

For more information, see <http://www.OurAir.org>