

MEDIA RELEASE

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Be Informed and Be Prepared for Poor Air Quality Conditions in Kittitas County

Kittitas County is currently under the second Air Quality Alert issued by the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). Fires from neighboring counties continue to affect the air quality in Kittitas County and the alert issued by Ecology is effective until further notice.

The Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) wants residents to be aware that air quality issues will likely continue. Changing weather conditions and changing fire conditions contribute to air quality in our county. KCPHD wants residents to be aware of current air quality conditions in order to take necessary steps to stay healthy.

Air quality information can be accessed at any time via the Washington Air Quality Advisory (WAQA) online <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/enviwa/>. WAQA is a tool that measures the air quality with categories ranging from “good” to “hazardous” air. Additional resources include the following:

- Washington Smoke Blog <http://wasmoke.blogspot.com/> contains information about smoke as well as active wildfires.
- Puget Sound Clean Air’s Graphing Tool <http://airgraphing.pscleanair.org/> shows real time changes for the station in Ellensburg.
- National Weather Service <http://www.weather.gov/> has weather related alerts, including air quality.
- Washington State Department of Health’s Wildfire Smoke page <http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/SmokeFromFires/WildfireSmoke> explains the harm of wildfire smoke.

“We know that we have active residents who want to enjoy the outdoors. We have students starting practice today for many school sports. Ultimately, we want activities to resume, but safely,” asserts Health Officer Dr. Mark Larson. “We want activities outdoor when we have “good” air and when air changes to “moderate” or worse, we want people to start making changes, which would include moving indoors.”

Attached is the “Air Pollution and School Activities” graph for specific recommendations based on air quality conditions. For more information about health concerns relating to air quality or informational resources, please contact KCPHD at (509)-962-7515.

Air Pollution and School Activities

Public Health Recommendations for Schools on Fine Particle Air Pollution



Air Quality Conditions					
First, check local air conditions at https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/enviwa/ and then use this chart.					
	Good	Moderate	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Unhealthy	Very Unhealthy/ Hazardous
Recess (15 minutes)	No restrictions.	Allow students with asthma, respiratory infection, lung or heart disease to stay indoors.	Keep students with asthma, respiratory infection, and lung or heart disease indoors.	Keep all students indoors and keep activity levels light.	Keep all students indoors and keep activity levels light.
P.E. (1 hour)	No restrictions.	Monitor students with asthma, respiratory infection, lung or heart disease. Increase rest periods or substitutions for these students as needed.	Limit to light outdoor activities. Allow any student to stay indoors if they don't want to go outside. Keep students with asthma, respiratory infection, lung or heart disease, and diabetes indoors. Limit these students to moderate activities. Students with asthma should follow their Asthma Action Plan.	Conduct P.E. indoors. Limit students to light indoor activities. Students with asthma should be following their Asthma Action Plan.	Keep all students indoors and keep activity levels light. Students with asthma should be following their Asthma Action Plan.
Athletic Events and Practices (Vigorous activity 2-3 hours)	No restrictions.	Monitor students with asthma, respiratory infection, lung or heart disease. Increase rest periods and substitutions for these students as needed. Students with asthma should follow their Asthma Action Plan.	Consider moving event indoors. If event is not cancelled, increase rest periods and substitutions to allow for lower breathing rates. Students with asthma, respiratory infection, lung and heart disease, or conditions like diabetes shouldn't play outdoors. Students with asthma should follow their Asthma Action Plan.	Cancel the event. Or move the event to an area with "Good" air quality — if this can be done without much time spent in transit through areas with poor air quality.	Cancel the event. Or move the event to an area with "Good" air quality — if this can be done without much time spent in transit through areas with poor air quality.

Light Activities: Playing board games, throwing and catching while standing, and cup stacking.

Moderate Activities: Yoga, shooting basketballs, dance instruction, and ping pong.

Vigorous Activities: Running, jogging, basketball, football, soccer, swimming, cheerleading, and jumping rope.