



Emergency Wildfire Smoke Regulation Adopted

On July 18, 2019, the Department of Industrial Relations' (DIR) Occupational Safety and Standards Board adopted an emergency regulation to protect outdoor workers from wildfire smoke. The regulation is expected to go into effect in early August, at the latest.

This regulation will be effective for one year and it applies to workplaces where the current Air Quality Index (AQI) for airborne particulate matter (PM) is 151 or higher, and where employers should reasonably anticipate that employees could be exposed to wildfire smoke.

The following are the steps that employers must take to protect workers:

- Identify harmful PM from wildfire smoke before each shift and periodically thereafter by checking the AQI for PM 2.5 (the pollutant of concern).
- Reduce the exposure by relocating workers to an enclosed building with filtered air or move workers to another outdoor location where the AQI for PM 2.5 is less than 150.
- If you cannot move workers out of the area with the AQI reading in excess of 151, then you must provide:
 - Respirators, such as N95 masks, for voluntary use.
 - Training on the new regulation, the health effects of wildfire smoke, and the safe use and maintenance of respirators.

There are some exemptions to the rule:

- Those working in indoor workplaces and enclosed vehicles with filtered air
- Firefighters engaged in wildfire fighting activities
- Workers exposed to short term foul air – no more than 1 hour

Once approved and published, the full [text of the adopted emergency regulation](#), including all requirements, exemptions and exceptions, will appear in the new Title 8, Section 5141.1 of the California Code of Regulations.

Full Text of Regulation: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/OSHSB/documents/Protection-from-Wildfire-Smoke-Emergency-txtbrdconsider.pdf>

N95 Respirator Mask Examples

