



Office of Environmental Health and Safety

Bridge wildfire smoke protection: Frequently Asked Questions

The recent [Bridge Fire](#) has had a significant impact on Cal Poly Pomona, with smoke and ash from the blaze affecting air quality on campus and posing health risks to students, faculty, and staff. To mitigate the hazard of poor air quality, the university has adjusted class schedules and modified outdoor activities due to unhealthy air quality conditions.

1. What is wildfire smoke and why is it a concern for our university community?

Wildfire smoke consists of harmful particles and gases released when vegetation burns. It poses health risks, particularly for individuals with respiratory issues, cardiovascular conditions, or other health vulnerabilities. For a university community, smoke can affect students, faculty, and staff, especially if they are involved in outdoor activities or living on campus.

2. What are some of the mitigation strategies CPP is doing to keep employees and students safe?

- Building air handling systems have been modified to limit outdoor air. They have filters in place to significantly reduce the circulation of smoke and ash inside campus buildings.
- Outdoor activities classes, athletic practices, and other planned outdoor activities have been moved indoors or rescheduled.
- The university will send alerts and updates via email, text and social media to inform the community of any changes in campus operations

3. How can I determine if there is wildfire smoke on campus?

- **Check air quality indices:** Use apps or websites like [AirNow](#) or your [local air quality monitoring service](#) for updates.
- **Monitor campus notifications:** The [university](#) will provide updates on air quality and any changes to campus operations.
- **Observe visual and sensory signs:** Notice if there is a haze or smoke smell on campus.

4. What actions should students and staff take to protect themselves from wildfire smoke?

- **Limit outdoor activities:** Stay indoors as much as possible during heavy smoke conditions.
- **Use campus resources:** Access university buildings with air filtration systems for a cleaner air environment.
- **Follow health guidelines:** Maintain personal well-being by staying hydrated and avoiding strenuous activities.

5. How can I stay informed about changes or updates related to wildfire smoke?

- **University alerts:** Pay attention to official [communication](#) from the university through email, text alerts, and social media.
- **EH&S website:** Regularly check the [EH&S website](#) for updates and safety information.
- **Local news:** Stay informed through local news channels and weather services.

6. What does the Air Quality Index (AQI) mean and how do I interpret it

- AQI is an acronym for the Air Quality Index. It takes direct measurements in milligrams per cubic meter of air and translates that into a unitless number for easy monitoring. An AQI of 0-50 is "Good Air Quality" (Green) and more elevated numbers translate to different risk levels.
- The following chart is from AirNow.gov and shows the different air quality levels.

Category, Color & Range	What does this mean?	Precautions to take
Good 0-50	Air quality is good.	None: Everyone enjoy outdoor activities.
Moderate 51-100	Air quality is a concern for people who are extra sensitive to air pollution.	People extra sensitive to air pollution: Plan strenuous outdoor activities when air quality is better.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups 101-150	Air quality is unhealthy for many people including active adults, people with lung disease (including asthma), older adults and children.	Sensitive groups: Cut back or reschedule strenuous outdoor activities.
Unhealthy 151-200	Air quality is unhealthy for everyone, especially people with heart or lung disease.	Everyone: Avoid strenuous outdoor activities.
Very Unhealthy 201-300	Air quality is unhealthy for everyone, especially people with heart or lung disease.	Everyone: Avoid physical outdoor activities.
Hazardous 301-500	Air quality is hazardous for everyone.	Everyone: Avoid all outdoor activities.

- To stay apprised of the air quality in your region, it's recommended to download the [AQMD AirNow](#) mobile app which can give you real-time air quality alerts.

7. What should I do if I smell smoke in my building?

- Please contact EH&S for any indoor air quality concerns.
- Phone: (909) 869-4697
- Email: ehs@cpp.edu

8. How can I obtain an N95 respirator

- Employees can request N95 respirators for voluntary use by contacting the EH&S office and completing the [N95 mask voluntary use form](#).

9. Are there specific precautions for students with pre-existing health conditions?

- **Consult health services:** Students with asthma, allergies, or other respiratory conditions should contact campus health services for advice and support.
- **Monitor health:** Keep track of symptoms and seek medical attention if needed.
- **Plan ahead:** Ensure you have an adequate supply of any prescribed medications and follow your doctor's advice.

10. Are there resources available for students affected by the evacuation order?

- Students affected by an evacuation can access **emergency housing, basic needs resources, and case management support** through the Care Center. We're here to help you navigate any challenges you may be facing.
- The Care Center is located on the **first floor of Building 97**. You can reach us by emailing carecenter@cpp.edu or calling **909-869-5071**. We offer **Walk-in Hours Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** and are open until **7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays**.

For any additional questions or concerns, please contact Environmental Health and Safety office at ehs@cpp.edu or 909-869-4697.