

TOOLBOX SAFETY TALK

WHAT TASKS AT YOUR WORKSITE COULD EXPOSE YOU TO WILDFIRE SMOKE?

EXPLAIN THE DANGER: WILDFIRE SMOKE FACTS

Wildfire smoke contains microscopic particles and gases. These may be hazardous for workers because they can be inhaled deep into the lungs, as well as irritating a worker's eyes, nose, and throat.

Symptoms of wildfire smoke exposure include:

- Coughing
- Wheezing or difficulty breathing
- Chest pains
- Headache and dizziness
- Sore and watery eyes
- Nose, throat, and sinus irritation

Workers in the following categories may be at a higher risk of illness caused by exposure to wildfire smoke:

- Pregnant or elderly workers
- Outdoor workers
- Smokers
- Workers with a pre-existing heart or lung condition

PREVENTING WILDFIRE SMOKE EXPOSURE

Assess and Discuss:

- Has your team completed a hazard assessment and identified controls to eliminate or reduce workers' exposure to wildfire smoke?
- What is the air quality at your worksite today?
- Does your Environmental Health office have any recommendations for outdoor activities that you should follow?
- Have you reviewed the signs and symptoms of wildfire smoke exposure with your team members?

IDENTIFY CONTROLS

- Can you **eliminate** or defer a job or task that exposes a worker to wildfire smoke?
- Can you **substitute** outdoor work for indoor work or for less physically demanding tasks?
- Can you use engineering controls such as:
 - Air purifiers with HEPA filters.
 - Putting air conditioners on "recirculate" instead of bringing in outside air.
- Can you implement administrative controls, such as:
 - Limit outdoor work or create an outdoor work schedule.
 - Review safe job procedures to account for wildfire smoke exposure.
- Do you need personal protective equipment such as fit-tested respirators?

See: OHS Regulations – Sections 21, 70, 71, 89, 90, 91, 92, Mine Health and Safety Regulations – Section 8.04