SAFETY BULLETIN

August 20, 2020

UCSF Monitors Changing Air Quality Due to Wildfires Update #1

UCSF leaders and emergency management teams are monitoring wildfires across the state and assessing their impact on air quality to help protect the safety and security of employees, learners and patients.

Members of the UCSF community are encouraged to check the air quality index (AQI) in their area by visiting the Environmental Protection Agency’s AirNow website. This website includes a search box to check air quality by zip code, as well as maps identifying what actions are advised.

This bulletin includes the following guidance for the UCSF community:

- actions UCSF is taking in response to changing air quality;
- what you can do to minimize the impact of wildfire smoke and “spare the air” while also complying with public health orders to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

UCSF Guidance for Changing Air Quality Index (AQI)

**AQI UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS 101-150:** When the AQI levels reach 101, all members of the UCSF community who are sensitive to smoke, such as children and people with respiratory diseases (e.g., asthma), should limit their outdoor exertion and follow guidance from their personal health care providers.

**AQI UNHEALTHY 151-200:** When AQI exceeds 151, everyone may experience health effects and should limit prolonged outdoor exertion. Supervisors of UCSF employees who work outdoors should provide alternate indoor activities wherever possible.

The extraordinary circumstances of preventing the spread of COVID-19 require UCSF to prioritize making N95 masks available for health care workers in clinical settings using the guidelines currently in place for COVID-19. N95 masks for wildfire smoke-related purposes are prioritized for those in the following two groups:

- UCSF employees who work for prolonged periods of time outdoors, and

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Mike Denson
Chief of Police

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UCSF employees and learners who have underlying medical conditions that make them vulnerable to the effects of wildfire smoke.

Supervisors have made N95 masks available to outdoor workers. Those with underlying medical conditions should consult with Occupational Health Services and UCSF Student Health and Counseling Services to request an N95 mask. Please note that due to a limited supply of N95 masks, only one mask will be given per person, per incident. It is important to note that N95 masks are not appropriate for children and that anyone who uses an N95 mask should follow the instructions for their proper use.

UCSF Health Employees: Those working inside of UCSF Health facilities must continue to follow COVID-19 universal masking procedures. The use of N95 masks in the clinical setting should remain limited to current clinical guidelines as noted on the Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Control website.

Indoor Air Quality in UCSF Buildings

- When wildfire smoke results in an AQI of 101 or higher, UCSF will begin limited indoor air quality monitoring.
- Please be sure that all windows and exterior doors are kept closed whenever possible for those working or studying onsite. Indoor air may smell smoky because all building ventilation systems will continue to maximize outside air, an industry established guideline to curb the transmission of COVID-19.
- Most UCSF buildings have filters that remove particulates, and indoor air quality is expected to be better than outdoors. However, some buildings may still smell smoky when outdoor smoke levels are high. If you have questions or concerns about the indoor air quality in a UCSF building, please contact emer.mgt@ucsf.edu. In Fresno, please contact facilities@fresno.ucsf.edu.

Evacuations in Wildfire Areas

- Employees and learners who are being evacuated from their homes in wildfire areas should follow local emergency orders. Those who need additional assistance should contact emer.mgt@ucsf.edu.

State of Emergency

- Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a statewide emergency on August 18 to help ensure the availability of resources to combat the wildfires. Newsom is urging the UC community to reduce energy demands from 3 to 10 p.m.
- A spare the air alert has been issued through August 23 warning Bay Area communities about unhealthy air quality resulting from wildfires. This alert means Together for a Safe and Crime-Free Campus

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it is illegal to burn wood and that everyone is encouraged to conserve energy, know the health effects of unhealthy air, review the AQI and check the weather forecast in their area.

Stay Informed

- More information about UCSF’s wildfire and air quality response will be updated as soon as possible online.
- Managers are also receiving information from HR about how to respond to questions and requests from impacted employees.
- Sign up for UCSF WarnMe and include your cellphone number for UCSF emergency alerts and notifications.

Help fight crime by reporting suspicious persons and/or suspicious activity to UCSF PD immediately—race, gender, and religious affiliation are NOT considered suspicious. For emergency or in-progress events, dial 911 when using on-campus land lines and 415.476-6911 when using cell phones. For non-emergency calls, please dial 415.476-1414.

20-08-03 CP

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