



# PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, March 21, 2024

## **Public Health Recommends Getting “Smoke Ready” during Spring Prescribed Burn Season**

Crook County Health Department has resources to help protect our community from smoke. The start of prescribed burn season brings the potential for smoke in and around homes and communities. While prescribed burns are a key tool to protect the community, smoke from prescribed burns can reduce air quality and harm health.

Crook County Health Department offers easy ways for you to recognize and protect yourself from poor air quality that may result from prescribed burns this spring. It is a good time to get ready now, before wildfire season begins and smoke impacts could happen at any time.

"Smoke from prescribed burns and wildfire contains fine particles that can cause problems when you breathe the air. People at the highest risk of illness are those with chronic lung or heart conditions, older adults and children," said Katie Plumb, Crook County Health and Human Services Director. "People with asthma or other lung conditions should keep medications available and contact their healthcare provider if needed."

### **Public Health suggests people take the following steps to avoid breathing problems or other symptoms during prescribed fire season:**

- The number one recommendation for everyone is to limit your exposure to smoke. Older adults, young children, and people with heart or lung conditions are more sensitive to smoke.
- Be sure to close your windows at night, as highest concentrations of smoke tend to occur overnight and during the early morning hours.

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- Check the current air quality for your area at [www.fire.airnow.gov](http://www.fire.airnow.gov). Avoid areas with highest smoke levels (AQI 150+).
- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity when smoke is heavy. Use the air quality index to decide whether outside activities are safe for you and your family: <https://www.airnow.gov/aqi/aqi-basics/>.
- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed when smoke is heaviest. Use a filter in your heating and cooling system that removes fine particles.
- Building a box fan filter is an affordable and effective way to keep indoor air clean: <https://vimeo.com/454191902>.
- Visit [www.211info.org](http://www.211info.org) to see when and where cleaner indoor air spaces are available to the public.
- Try to avoid driving in smoky areas. If you need to drive in these areas, keep your windows rolled up and vents closed. Set the air conditioning on “re-circulate.” This will avoid bringing smoke into your car.
- For more information about how to protect your health from smoke, visit: <https://centraloregonfire.org/protect-your-health/>

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