

August 7, 2017

CONTINUED AIR QUALITY ADVISORY

Metro Vancouver is continuing an Air Quality Advisory for Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley because of high concentrations of **fine particulate matter** that are expected to persist until there is a change in the weather. Air quality continues to be affected by the current weather pattern over the BC Coast, which has caused outflow winds to transport smoke from wildfires burning in the BC Interior into our region.

Smoke concentrations may vary widely across the region as winds and temperatures change, and as wildfire behaviour changes.

Fine particulate matter, also known as PM_{2.5}, refers to airborne solid or liquid droplets with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres (µm) or less. PM_{2.5} can easily penetrate indoors because of their small size.

Persons with chronic underlying medical conditions should postpone strenuous exercise until the advisory is lifted. Exposure is particularly a concern for infants, the elderly and those who have diabetes, and lung or heart disease. If you are experiencing symptoms such as chest discomfort, shortness of breath, coughing or wheezing, follow the advice of your healthcare provider. As we are in the summer season with warm temperatures, it is also important to stay cool and hydrated. Indoor spaces with air conditioning may offer relief from both heat and air pollution.

This advisory is expected to continue until there is a change in the current weather.

Metro Vancouver works in cooperation with Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Fraser Valley Regional District and B.C. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to look after air quality.

Information about real-time air quality readings for Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley communities and potential health impacts can be found at www.airmap.ca and www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air.

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BACKGROUND

What is fine particulate matter?

Fine particulate matter, also known as **PM_{2.5}**, refers to airborne solid or liquid droplets with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres (µm) or less. PM_{2.5} concentrations tend to be highest around busy roads, industrial operations, major ports as well as areas with residential wood burning. PM_{2.5} can easily penetrate indoors because of their small size.

Tips to reduce your personal health risk:

- Avoid roads with heavy vehicle traffic and areas with wood smoke.
- Stay cool and drink plenty of water.
- Continue to manage medical conditions such as asthma, chronic respiratory disease and heart failure. If symptoms continue to be bothersome, seek medical attention.
- Maintaining good overall health is a good way to prevent health effects resulting from short-term exposure to air pollution.

And especially for persons with chronic underlying medical conditions:

- Stay in cool, air-conditioned environments and reduce indoor pollution sources such as smoking and vacuuming.
- Reduce indoor sources of pollution such as smoking and vacuuming, and run an air cleaner. Some room air cleaners, such as HEPA filters, can help reduce indoor particulate levels provided they are the right size for your home and filters are changed regularly.
- Consider taking shelter in air-conditioned buildings which have large indoor volumes and limited entry of outdoor air.

Voluntary emission reduction actions

Reducing sources of fine particulates throughout Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley will be beneficial to air quality. Actions people can take:

- Minimize the use of diesel powered equipment.
- Consider taking transit or carpooling rather than driving to your destination.
- Follow local regulations for recreational fires. Avoid lighting a fire where possible.

Additional Information

- Fine particulates are emitted from transportation sources, non-road engines, heating and burning.
- Fine particulate levels are compared to medium-term (24-hour) objectives.

Under provincial legislation, Metro Vancouver is responsible for monitoring air quality, controlling industrial, commercial and some residential emissions, creating long-term plans, and conducting emission inventories for the Metro Vancouver region.

To help reduce air emissions throughout the Lower Mainland, Metro Vancouver works cooperatively with the Fraser Valley Regional District, the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Environment and Climate Change Canada and other agencies to develop and implement emission reduction programs for businesses and local residents. Further information about air quality programs in the region can be found on Metro Vancouver's website at www.metrovancouver.org.