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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

To: Health Care Providers
From: Maine CDC on behalf of Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Subject: **Maine DEP issues an Air Quality Alert for Tuesday, July 18**
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Maine DEP issues an Air Quality Alert for Tuesday, July 18

Particle pollution concentrations are expected to reach "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" level Tuesday, July 18, according to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). A plume of smoke from fires in western Canada pushed into the Great Lakes during the weekend and continued eastward on Monday. For Tuesday, Maine can expect hours in the "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" range for all three western regions as well as the Northern region. Moderate values of particle pollution is expected in the Eastern Interior region and winds off the Gulf of Maine should keep the Mid-Coast and Downeast Coastal regions Good.

At elevated particle pollution levels, children, healthy adults who exert themselves, and individuals suffering from a respiratory disease such as asthma, bronchitis or COPD can experience reduced lung function and irritation. When this happens, individuals may notice a shortness of breath, coughing, throat irritation, and/or experience an uncomfortable sensation in their chest. Additionally, those with a heart disease should also follow these recommendations.

Some actions you can take to protect your health during periods of unhealthy air quality include:

- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity.
- If you are exposed to heavy smoke or have health concerns that might be worsened by smoke, consider wearing a N95 or KN95 mask. If you do not have one on hand, any well-fitting mask would likely help reduce some of the particles potentially inhaled into the lungs.
- If you are indoors, close windows and circulate indoor air with a fan or air conditioner.

- The Maine CDC Asthma Prevention and Control Program has asthma information available at their web site: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/mat/>
- For more information on asthma control visit EPA's Web site <https://epa.gov/asthma> to find information about asthma triggers and lessons on asthma management.
- Health information for smoke impacted areas: <https://www.airnow.gov/air-quality-and-health/fires-and-your-health/>

In addition to those in a sensitive group, sports coaches, elder care workers, nurses and others who are responsible for the welfare of people impacted by poor air quality are urged to use one of the listed tools to follow the Air Quality Forecast:

- **Air Quality Forecast page:** <http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/> which has links to:
 - **EnviroFlash**, EPA's email and text alert system, <http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/enviroflash.html>
 - **Twitter**, for sign up information go to: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/twitter.html>
 - **EPA's mobile app** is available at: <https://www.airnow.gov/airnow-mobile-app/>
- **“Wildfires and Air Quality” online resource set up by the Mills Administration:** <https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/wildfires>
- **Maine DEP's toll-free air quality hotline:** 1-800-223-1196

In addition, you may check EPA's AirNow Fire & Smoke map for particle pollution levels: <https://fire.airnow.gov/>

On Wednesday, there may still be smoke in certain regions. Visit the DEP website at <http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/> for updates.