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For Immediate Release



Maine DEP Issues Air Quality Alert as Particle Pollution Levels Predicted to Escalate to Unhealthy Ranges

AUGUSTA, July 17, 2026 — The Maine Department of Environmental Protection warns that ground-level particle pollution concentrations are forecasted to reach the 'Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups' (USG) level this Saturday due to wildfire smoke drifting in from Manitoba and Ontario, Canada.

The smoke plume is expected to move back over Maine during the day on Saturday, with air quality measured by a 24-hour average forecasted at the USG level. Some hours may experience particle pollution levels even higher than this range. Residents are encouraged to follow health recommendations that suit their individual needs.

Smoke conditions may improve by midday Sunday, but due to the unpredictable nature of wildfire smoke, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection advises checking their website or calling the toll-free Air Quality Hotline at 800-223-1196 for the latest updates throughout the weekend.

Elevated particle pollution levels can affect sensitive groups such as children, older adults, outdoor workers, and individuals with respiratory or heart conditions including asthma, bronchitis, and COPD. Symptoms may include coughing, shortness of breath, throat irritation, and mild chest pain. Even healthy adults engaging in outdoor physical activity might notice these effects.

Some actions you can take to protect your health during such periods include:

- Avoiding strenuous outdoor activity
- Closing windows and circulating indoor air with a fan or air conditioner

- Asthmatics should keep their quick-relief medications and action plan handy

Additional health information may be found on the following websites:

- [Maine CDC asthma prevention and control](#)
- [USEPA's asthma control and management](#)
- [AIRNOW for smoke impacted areas](#)

In addition to those in a sensitive group, 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:

- [Maine DEP's Air Quality Forecast](#)
- [Maine DEP's Air Quality Hotline: 1-800-223-1196](#)
- [USEPA's EnviroFlash email and text alert system](#)
- [USEPA's AIRNOW Fire and Smoke Map](#)
- [USEPA's AIRNOW Mobile App](#)
- [Governor Mill's "Wildfires and Air Quality" online resource](#)

For more information go to [Maine DEP's air quality web site](#).

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