



# SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT ANNOUNCEMENTS

www.aqmd.gov

@SouthCoastAQMD    

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** August 21, 2020

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Bradley Whitaker, (909) 396-3456, Cell: (909) 323-9516

Nahal Mogharabi, (909) 396-3773, Cell: (909) 837-2431

[press@aqmd.gov](mailto:press@aqmd.gov)

## **South Coast AQMD Continues Special Air Advisory Due to Elevated Ozone and PM2.5 Levels**

***Valid: Friday, August 21, 2020 through Saturday, August 22, 2020***

**DIAMOND BAR**--Poor air quality is expected throughout the South Coast Air Basin and Coachella Valley for Friday and Saturday. Air quality will be impacted by elevated ozone levels due to a heat wave as well as elevated fine particulate matter (PM2.5) levels due to smoke from wildfires in both Southern and Northern California.

### **Elevated Ozone**

High temperatures are expected to persist today throughout the South Coast Air Basin and the Coachella Valley, increasing the likelihood of elevated ground-level ozone (smog) levels in many areas. Wildfires, which produce chemicals that help to form ozone, may also contribute to increased ozone levels.

Since Friday August 14, Air Quality Index (AQI) levels have been in the **Unhealthy to Very Unhealthy** categories each afternoon in inland areas throughout the region. On Friday afternoon, Air Quality Index (AQI) levels are once again in the **Unhealthy and Very Unhealthy** categories throughout a portion of the South Coast Air Basin. Ozone concentrations are expected to remain elevated until sunset.

The National Weather Service (NWS) is predicting the continuation of a heat wave over Southern California that will last through this afternoon. The NWS has issued excessive heat warnings for most of the South Coast Air Basin and the Coachella Valley that will expire this evening. For information regarding the NWS warnings and the most current weather information, visit the NWS' Los Angeles (<https://www.weather.gov/lox/>) and San Diego (<https://www.weather.gov/sgx/>) websites. Elevated temperatures, which enhance ozone formation rates, coupled with predicted atmospheric inversions that trap pollution near the surface, and increased emissions of chemicals that form ozone from nearby wildfires are expected to cause unusually high and persistent levels of ozone pollution.

On Saturday afternoon, AQI levels may reach the **Unhealthy to Very Unhealthy** AQI categories in the afternoon and early evening in the Santa Clarita Valley, the San Fernando Valley, the San Gabriel

Mountains, the San Gabriel Valley, the Inland Empire, the San Bernardino Mountains, and the northern Coachella Valley. Hourly AQI forecasts are available at [www.aqmd.gov/forecast](http://www.aqmd.gov/forecast) and can be used to plan activities when the air quality is best.

When air quality is **Unhealthy** and reaches an air quality index (AQI) range of 151 to 200, everyone may begin to experience some adverse health effects, and residents with higher sensitivity to air pollution may experience more serious effects. When air quality is **Very Unhealthy** with an AQI range of 201 to 300, everyone in the region may experience more serious health effects.

Ozone air pollution can cause respiratory health problems, including trouble breathing, asthma attacks, and lung damage. Research also indicates that ozone exposure can increase the risk of premature death. Children, older adults, and people with asthma or COPD may be more sensitive to the health effects of ozone.

### **Elevated PM2.5**

Wildfires burning in Southern and Northern California are producing heavy smoke, increasing the likelihood of elevated PM2.5 levels in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. Satellite imagery and smoke models indicate that smoke from several Northern California wildfires as well as localized smoke from fires in the South Coast Air Basin were present in the South Coast Air Basin on Friday. As of Friday afternoon, PM2.5 levels have reached the **Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups** and **Unhealthy** AQI categories in the Santa Clarita Valley and San Fernando Valley, and in portions of the San Gabriel Valley and the San Bernardino Mountains.

Smoke models predict that smoke from the Northern California wildfires could move into the South Coast Air Basin again late Friday evening through Saturday morning. Air quality models indicate that air quality impacts in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties from the northern California wildfires will last through at least late Saturday morning. AQI levels may reach **Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups** or higher AQI categories on Saturday morning. Winds from the west and southwest in the afternoon will help to disperse smoke on Saturday afternoon. For more information about the smoke impacts from local fires in the South Coast Air Basin, please see the South Coast AQMD's smoke advisories at [www.aqmd.gov/advisory](http://www.aqmd.gov/advisory).

Fine particulate matter or PM2.5 can get deep into the lungs and cause heart problems and breathing problems (including asthma attacks), increases in emergency room visits and hospitalizations. Older adults, young children, pregnant women, and people with heart diseases or lung diseases (such as asthma) may be especially sensitive to health risks from wildfire smoke.

In any area impacted by smoke: If you smell smoke or see ash due to a wildfire, limit your exposure by remaining indoors with windows and doors closed or seeking alternate shelter, and avoiding vigorous physical activity. For more tips on protecting yourself during a wildfire, see South Coast AQMD's Wildfire Smoke & Ash Health & Safety Tips page: <http://www.aqmd.gov/wildfire-health-info-smoke-tips>

Areas of direct impacts and poor air quality may include portions of:

- **Los Angeles County:** Central Los Angeles (Area 1), Northwest Coastal LA County (Area 2), West San Fernando Valley (Area 6), East San Fernando Valley (Area 7), West San Gabriel Valley (Area

8), East San Gabriel Valley (Area 9), Pomona-Walnut Valley (Area 10), South San Gabriel Valley (Area 11), Santa Clarita Valley (Area 13), San Gabriel Mountains (Area 15)

- **Orange County:** Northern Orange County (Area 16)
- **Riverside County:** Corona-Norco (Area 22), Metropolitan Riverside County (Area 23), Perris Valley (Area 24), Lake Elsinore (Area 25), Temecula Valley (Area 26), Anza Valley (Area 27), Hemet-San Jacinto Valley (Area 28), San Gorgonio Pass (Area 29), Coachella Valley (Area 30)
- **San Bernardino County:** Northwest San Bernardino Valley (Area 32), Southwest San Bernardino Valley (Area 33), Central San Bernardino Valley (Area 34), East San Bernardino Valley (Area 35), West San Bernardino Mountains (Area 36), Central San Bernardino Mountains (Area 37), East San Bernardino Mountains (Area 38)



- South Coast AQMD Advisory updates can be found at the following link: [www.aqmd.gov/advisory](http://www.aqmd.gov/advisory)
- To subscribe to air quality alerts, advisories and forecasts by email, go to [www.AirAlerts.org](http://www.AirAlerts.org)
- To view current air quality conditions by region in an interactive map, see <http://www.aqmd.gov/aqimap>
- For real-time air quality information, maps, notifications and health alerts in your area, download our award-winning South Coast AQMD app at: [www.aqmd.gov/mobileapp](http://www.aqmd.gov/mobileapp)
- Air quality forecasts are available at <http://www.aqmd.gov/forecast>
- For South Coast AQMD Daily Rule 403.1 High Wind Forecasts for the Coachella Valley call (909) 396-2399 or 1-800-CUT-SMOG
- For a map of South Coast AQMD Forecast Areas, see <http://www.aqmd.gov/ForecastAreas>.

South Coast AQMD is the air pollution control agency for Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, including the Coachella Valley. For news, air quality

alerts, event updates and more, please visit us at [www.aqmd.gov](http://www.aqmd.gov), download our award-winning app, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

###