



COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS FOR EXTREME HEAT & UNHEALTHY AIR QUALITY

General information:

- Alameda County's Shelter in Place Order remains in effect and everyone is encouraged to stay home as much as possible to be safe from both smoke and COVID-19.
- Cloth and surgical masks used for COVID-19 protection provide very little protection against smoke. However, everyone should continue following all COVID-19 precautions, including wearing face coverings when in public.
- N95 masks are prioritized for health care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and should only be used for wildfire protection by those who do not have the option to stay indoors.
- The EPA offers tips for reducing smoke exposure during Shelter-In-Place by creating a clean room in the home: <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/create-clean-room-protect-indoor-air-quality-during-wildfire>.
- Watch for signs of heat illness, including headache, dizziness or nausea, and consider medical attention. Learn more from our Heat Pocket Guide, provided in 6 languages: <http://www.acphd.org/phep/heat-and-health.aspx>.

Cooling & Cleaner Air Centers

- While closed for normal operations per the County's Shelter in Place orders, libraries or other public buildings designated as cooling centers may open for operation as cooling centers. Designated county Cooling Centers can be found at <https://www.acgov.org/emergencysite/>.
- ACPHD [guidance for cooling center operations](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic aligns with [state guidance](#) and includes operational considerations for accommodating physical distancing, symptoms screening, face coverings, and enhanced cleaning and hygiene.
- Buildings with HVAC/air filtration can reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission indoors. In Alameda County, some self-reported filtration information is available for cooling centers. However, most cooling centers are not currently operating. See [self-reported filtration data](#).
 - Note: Recommended filtration for facilities is MERV level 11 or above. Most self-reporting facilities on this list with filtration employ MERV level 8.
- EPA Guidance for Cleaner Air Centers can be found here: <https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/wildfire-smoke/wildfire-smoke-guide-revised-2019.pdf>, Appendix B, page 71 of pdf.

Unhealthy Air Quality

Determining Air Quality

- Visit www.baaqmd.gov or www.airnow.gov to monitor local air quality. Air quality can change throughout the day and we recommend checking several times a day, and checking forecasts to help plan for the next day.
- Federal [EPA guidance](#) advises [consideration of outdoor event cancellation](#) at AQI of 151 (red) and above. At AQI 300 and above (burgundy) EPA advises [cancellation](#) of outdoor events. ACPHD has used this guidance to





ALAMEDA COUNTY COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA ★ CALIFORNIA

Office of Emergency Services

4985 Broder Blvd, Dublin, CA 94568

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

make recommendations for COVID-19 essential emergency services, such as food distribution sites, and testing sites.

Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	Meaning
Good	0 to 50	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
Unhealthy	151 to 200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.
Hazardous	301 to 500	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.

Sensitive Groups:

Some people are more likely to get ill from smoke exposure, including:

- Children less than 18 years;
- Adults age 65 years or older;
- Pregnant women;
- People with chronic health conditions such as heart or lung disease, including asthma and diabetes;
- People with low incomes and limited access to medical care.

Outdoor workers and people experiencing homelessness are also at risk due to additional exposure.

Precautionary measures to reduce smoke exposure at COVID-19 food distribution and/or testing sites include:

- Adjust service times to avoid worst air quality.
- Allow vehicle pick-up/visitation. Car vents or air conditioning can be set to “recirculate” to reduce exposure inside a vehicle.
 - If a line of cars is waiting, consider allowing a batch of cars in at one time so the remaining are not idling engines.
- Consider appointment times that minimize wait times for people without cars.
 - Testing sites should reduce wait times to less than 15 minutes.
 - Testing sites should provide guidance to people seeking appointments to follow Isolation & Quarantine orders even if appointments are cancelled



Alameda County Health Care Services Agency





ALAMEDA COUNTY COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA ★ CALIFORNIA

Office of Emergency Services

4985 Broder Blvd, Dublin, CA 94568

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

- Advise individuals most at risk to limit exposure.
 - For food distribution, those most vulnerable to adverse health impacts from smoke may be able to ask someone to retrieve food for them. This may require changes to per-person food limits.
 - People experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and those who know they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 should stay home.
- Move operations indoors (COVID-19 modifications for physical distancing, face coverings, enhanced hygiene and cleaning apply)
 - For testing sites, [CDC indoor testing guidance](#) applies
- Take precautions to reduce smoke exposure for site staff:
 - Provide N95 masks to site staff working outdoors; ensure masks are fitted properly.
 - Rotate shifts and provide frequent breaks in a cleaner air indoor environment.
 - Do not deploy staff who may be at high risk for health impacts from smoke exposure.

ACPHD RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COVID-19 TESTING & FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES

Air Quality Index	Meaning	Food Distribution Sites	Testing Sites
101 - 150 Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Air Quality is Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups. Children, older adults and those w/ breathing or heart issues should limit outdoor activities.	Continue operations with appropriate PPE and protective measures for staff	Consider reducing hours with appropriate PPE & protective measures for staff, or moving operations indoors Reduce wait times to less than 15 min
151 - 200 Unhealthy	Air Quality is Unhealthy. Everyone, especially children, older adults and those w/ breathing or heart issues, should limit outdoor activities.	Consider reducing hours or moving operations indoors	Consider closing or move operations indoors
201- 300 Very Unhealthy	Air Quality is Very Unhealthy. Stay indoors with windows and doors closed to avoid poor air quality.	Consider closing or moving operations indoors	Close
301 - 500 Hazardous	Air Quality is Hazardous. Avoid all activity outdoors. Sensitive groups: remain indoors & keep activity levels low.	Close	Close



Alameda County Health Care Services Agency





ALAMEDA COUNTY COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA ★ CALIFORNIA

Office of Emergency Services

4985 Broder Blvd, Dublin, CA 94568

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

Other Resources

Protective Actions for Fire Season

- Air Now: <https://www.airnow.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/prepare-for-fire-season.pdf>
- ACPHD: <http://www.acphd.org/wildfire-smoke.aspx>

Reducing Exposure to Wildfire Smoke during COVID-19 Pandemic (CDC): https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/covid-19/reduce_exposure_to_wildfire_smoke_covid-19.html

Wildfire Smoke and COVID-19 FAQs (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/smoke-faq.html>

Creating a Clean Room (EPA): <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/create-clean-room-protect-indoor-air-quality-during-wildfire>

Wildfire Smoke and COVID-19 resources from CDC:

- https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/covid-19/wildfire_smoke_covid-19.html
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/smoke-faq.html>

Monitoring Air Quality Conditions Affected by Wildfire Smoke

Current Data: AirNow: Entering zip code will show current air quality, brief recommendations for protective actions given current air quality, and five-day air quality forecast. <https://www.airnow.gov/>

Notifications: EnviroFlash allows signups to receive air quality notifications via email when an Air Quality Action Day is declared. <http://www.enviroflash.info/>

Twitter Accounts for Up to Date Regional Information:

- Alameda County Fire: <https://twitter.com/AlamedaCoFire>
- Alameda County Office of Emergency Services: <https://twitter.com/AlamedaCoAlert>
- Alameda County Public Health Department: <https://twitter.com/Dare2BWell>
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District: <https://twitter.com/AirDistrict>
- National Weather Service Bay Area: <https://twitter.com/NWSBayArea>

More detailed maps, history and projections:

- AirNow Fire and Smoke Map: Map includes data layers on air quality from permanent monitors and low-cost sensors and smoke plumes. Additional layers include large fire incidents and satellite detections of fires. <https://fire.airnow.gov/>
- BAAQMD Current & Historical Air Quality Data: Can be viewed on hourly or daily basis. Historical information is available. <https://www.baaqmd.gov/about-air-quality/current-air-quality/air-monitoring-data/#/aqi-highs>
- National Weather Service Air Quality Forecast Guidance for Northern California: Hour-by-hour predictions for surface smoke. Pull down menu :<https://airquality.weather.gov/sectors/northcaliforniaLoop.php#tabs>
- Spare the Air Five-Day Air Quality Forecast: Entering city will show air quality forecast. Note that in past major fire events, forecasts have sometimes not predicted full extent of ongoing poor air quality. <https://www.sparetheair.org/understanding-air-quality/air-quality-forecast>

