



Air Quality Guidance for Childcare/Daycare Providers

Air Quality Index (AQI)

This guide provides action steps based on the air quality index, referred to as "AQI." Staff should always reference EPA's AirNow at [fire.airnow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov) for the AQI. Reference the closest 'permanent monitor' (large circle) for the most accurate government certified AQI.

The smaller circles are uncertified sensors which are good for 'real time' air quality checks but not as exact as the EPA permanent monitors (large circles).

Smoke Impact on Youth Over Time

Smoke from wildfires, woodstoves, and backyard fires can cause both immediate and long-term health impacts for youth and adults. Youth, and especially babies and toddlers, face greater health impacts due to smoke because of their development stage and because they breathe more air per minute than adults.

When wood and other materials burn, it creates smoke filled with millions of tiny particles and harmful toxins. These tiny particles, known officially as 'particulate matter,' along with toxins enter our bodies when we breathe. Once in our lungs, smoke can make it hard to breathe, cause lung infections, weaken heart function, trigger asthma, and even affect your cognitive abilities and mental health.

While a few days of 'smoky air' during the summer might not seem serious, breathing smoke and harmful toxins year after year adds up, especially for youth. That's why it's important to act before air quality gets bad and do your best to keep indoor air clean.

The Value of Prevention

While outdoor air quality is often out of our control, the steps in this document help reduce smoke exposure. These steps are most effective when implemented early and consistently. Key strategies include:

- Preventing prolonged smoke exposure and prioritizing protecting indoor air quality by avoiding activities like candle burning, frying food, and vacuuming (without a HEPA filter);
- Using air purifiers and ensuring filters are in good condition; consider running purifiers all the time to reduce dust and other allergens;
- Creating protocols for "clean air breaks" during extended smoke events by creating 'cleaner air rooms' or by taking youth to locations with better outdoor air quality.

Additional Resources

- [Oregon Health Authority](#) smoke/wildfire fact sheets for schools
- Oregon [OSHA's permanent rules for protection from wildfire smoke \(PDF\)](#) employee safety
- EPA's [Wildfires and Indoor Air Quality](#), info including a DIY air cleaner



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AQI	Action Steps
Good (0-50) GREEN AQI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open windows and doors to maximize ventilation. ● Outdoor activities encouraged!
Moderate (51-100) YELLOW AQI Monitor symptoms and AQI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● External windows and doors closed unless needed for ventilation. ● Consider turning on classroom air purifier to at least low. ● Lessen outdoor activity duration and intensity.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101-150) ORANGE AQI Sensitive groups include youth, pregnant people, those with heart/lung disease, and those 65+. Youth may be outside but <i>reduce duration and minimize heavy exertion while outside.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Turn classroom air purifier to a higher setting. ● If available, turn on air scrubber in hallway or entranceway. ● Windows closed. Minimize opening doors, especially exterior doors. ● Close classroom doors to preserve classroom air quality. ● Run classroom air purifier an hour before and after use. ● Students/staff with smoke-sensitive health conditions should be where indoor air quality is closely protected. ● Limit outdoor activity duration and intensity – consider indoor physical activity alternatives.
Unhealthy (151 and UP) RED AQI Everyone should avoid outdoor activities and stay indoors with an air purifier operating on high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Turn classroom air purifiers to highest setting – monitor filter status and replace as needed. Monitor indoor air quality closely. ● Turn air scrubbers to highest setting. Regularly inspect filter status. ● Ensure all external windows, doors, and vents are closed; minimize opening. ● Ensure classroom doors remain closed to preserve indoor air quality. ● All activities, including recess, should be conducted indoors for all students and staff. ● Field trips to locations with better air quality highly encouraged.
Very Unhealthy (201 – 300) PURPLE AQI Everyone stays indoors with an air purifier operating on high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The decision to close school is based on the duration of RED AQI (151+) days (<i>or higher</i>) expected, the indoor air quality in classrooms with the use of air purifiers, and other measures (air scrubbers, etc.), and the consideration of air quality in the homes of students and staff.



Outdoor Air Quality Guide

Recommendations for very young children (0-5 yrs)

AQI Tools



Official Govt. Hourly AQI & Smoke Tracking

Developed in Partnership By:



LRAPA
Lane Regional Air Protection Agency



PUBLIC HEALTH
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Good



GREAT to Play Outside



Normal Play

AQI 0-50

Moderate



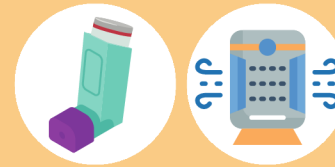
Less Outside Time OK



Slower Play

AQI 51-100

Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (Young Kids)



Inhaler Ready & Run Air Purifier



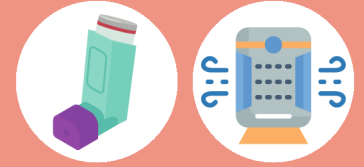
Limit Time Playing Outside



Calm Play

AQI 101-150

Unhealthy for Everyone



Inhaler Ready & Run Air Purifier



Stay Inside



Indoor Play

AQI 151 & Up