

July 5, 2015

AIR QUALITY ADVISORY

Metro Vancouver has issued an Air Quality Advisory for Metro Vancouver because of high concentrations of **fine particulate matter**, due to smoke from wildfires outside our region.

Persons with chronic underlying medical conditions should postpone strenuous exercise until the advisory is lifted. Staying indoors and in air conditioned spaces helps to reduce fine particulate exposure. Exposure is particularly a concern for infants, the elderly and those who have diabetes, and lung or heart disease.

This advisory is expected to continue until there is a change in the current weather.

Metro Vancouver works in cooperation with Environment Canada, the Fraser Valley Regional District and B.C. Ministry of Environment to look after air quality.

Information about real-time air quality readings for Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley communities and potential health impacts can be found at <http://www.airmap.ca> and www.bcairquality.ca.

Who to contact for more information

Geoff Doerksen, Air Quality Planner, Metro Vancouver
604-436-6742 (office), 604-240-0708 (cell)

or

Don Bradley, Division Manager, Media Relations, Metro Vancouver
604-451-6107 (office), 604-788-2821 (cell)

What is fine particulate matter?

Fine particulate matter refers to airborne solid or liquid droplets with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres (μm) or less. It is also known as **PM_{2.5}**.

PM_{2.5} concentrations tend to be highest around busy roads, industrial operations, major ports as well as areas with residential wood burning. PM_{2.5} can easily penetrate indoors because of their small size.

Tips to reduce your personal health risk.

- Avoid roads with heavy vehicle traffic and areas with wood smoke.
- Stay cool and drink plenty of water.
- Continue to manage medical conditions such as asthma, chronic respiratory disease and heart failure. If symptoms continue to be bothersome, seek medical attention.

- Maintaining good overall health is a good way to reduce health risks resulting from short-term exposure to air pollution.

And especially for persons with chronic underlying medical conditions:

- Stay in a cool, air-conditioned environment and reduce indoor sources of pollution such as smoking and vacuuming.
- Run an air cleaner. Some room air cleaners, such as HEPA filters, can help reduce indoor particulate levels provided they are the right size for your home and filters are changed regularly.
- Take shelter in air-conditioned buildings which have large indoor volumes and limited entry of outdoor air.

Voluntary Emission Reduction Actions

Reducing sources of fine particulates throughout Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley will be beneficial to air quality. Actions people can take:

- Minimize the use of diesel powered equipment.
- Consider taking transit or carpooling rather than driving to your destination.
- Follow local regulations for recreational fires. Avoid lighting a fire where possible.

Additional Information

- Transportation, non-road engines, heating and burning are significant sources of fine particulates in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.

Under provincial legislation, Metro Vancouver is responsible for monitoring air quality, controlling industrial, commercial and some residential emissions, creating long-term plans, and conducting emission inventories for the Metro Vancouver region.

To help reduce air emissions throughout the Lower Mainland, Metro Vancouver works cooperatively with the Fraser Valley Regional District, the B.C. Environment Ministry, Environment Canada and other agencies to develop and implement emission reduction programs for businesses and local residents. Further information about air quality programs in the region can be found on Metro Vancouver's website at <http://www.metrovancouver.org>.

