



## Division of Building Safety

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## Air Quality around Idaho Schools

It's wildfire season in Idaho again, and in addition to the hazard caused by fires themselves schools must also contend with smoke. Smoke levels have the most adverse impact on individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions, high levels of activity, and children. When smoke particulate levels rise dangerously, it may be necessary for schools to change operations.

The Department of Environmental Quality maintains a network of air sampling equipment and publishes the daily readings on [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov). These reports include both the current readings as well as the forecast for future maximum levels.

The Department of Environmental quality has also released [health recommendations](#) for schools experiencing smoke events from wildfires. The recommendations outline appropriate levels of activity for various types of activities on a graduated scale.

Smoke conditions change frequently based on winds, fire intensity and location. These frequent changes require flexibility on the part of school administrators, especially in the area of physical education and athletic games. It is often necessary to increase monitoring of sensitive individuals, reduce activity levels and in some cases cancel or reschedule athletic events.

Advance planning for poor air quality allows for school operations to remain flexible and safe for all involved.

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