



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Unhealthy Air Quality Continues in Santa Barbara County Take Precautions

**SANTA BARBARA, Calif.** — The air quality index shows unhealthy air quality in Santa Barbara County and air quality continues to worsen. **Santa Barbara air monitoring station has recorded “hazardous” levels, the Goleta station has recorded “very unhealthy” levels and the Lompoc station has recorded “unhealthy” levels.** With the Thomas Fire continuing to burn we anticipate continued concerns about air quality. N95 masks, when fitted properly, offer some limited protection from fine particles in smoke. Dust masks and surgical masks are not effective.

We recommend that everyone:

- Stay indoors, with windows closed and indoor circulation only. Air conditioning is also an option if the outside intake is closed. Avoid going outdoors. Particles can build up indoors, so if you are feeling symptoms where you are be prepared to relocate to an indoor location with better ventilation, or to leave the area.
- Avoid driving when possible and use “recycle” or re-circulate mode to avoid drawing smoky air into the car.
- Drink plenty of fluids to keep respiratory membranes moist.
- Avoid doing anything to stir up ash.

It is especially important for people with lung and heart conditions to stay indoors, and to consider leaving the area while the air quality index is “very unhealthy.” If able, relocate to an area not impacted by smoke.

For individuals who have to be outdoors for short periods of time:

- The cities of Goleta, Santa Barbara and Carpinteria will be distributing N 95 masks to individuals who need them. A maximum of two per person will be provided. Please monitor the news from local cities about distribution sites in your area.
- There are not enough masks to provide one for everyone in the South County. These masks are best for those with sensitivities who have to be outdoors for short periods of time. These masks do not filter out all of the harmful gases. They must also fit properly to be effective.
- Carefully read and follow the proper instructions to create a fitted seal around the nose and mouth.
- N95 masks do not come in sizes suitable for small children. All children, and especially those with asthma or other chronic health conditions, should avoid outdoor activity that would expose them to breathing in smoky air for extended periods of time.
- People who use inhalers for asthma or other conditions should make sure they have access to their inhaler, and refill prescriptions if necessary.

- People who have respiratory conditions should talk with their doctors about use of masks, as they reduce airflow.
- Masks do not fit properly on children, so keeping children out of smoke-impacted areas is advised.

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department and the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District today emphasized that the Air Quality Warning for Santa Barbara County remains in effect until conditions improve. Smoke and ash from the Thomas Fire burning in Ventura County may continue to affect local air quality for days. Levels of smoke and particles, and areas impacted, including potentially other areas of the county, will vary, and conditions could change quickly.

Check [www.OurAir.org/todays-air-quality/](http://www.OurAir.org/todays-air-quality/) for current conditions. The chart will indicate when air quality is good, moderate, unhealthy for sensitive groups, unhealthy for all, very unhealthy, and hazardous. For more information, also see <https://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=smoke.index>