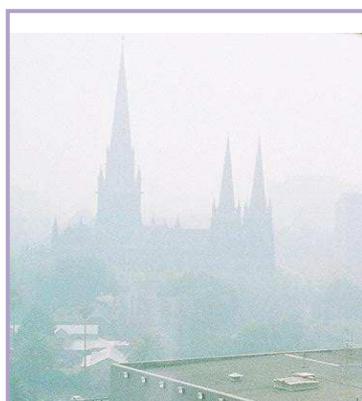


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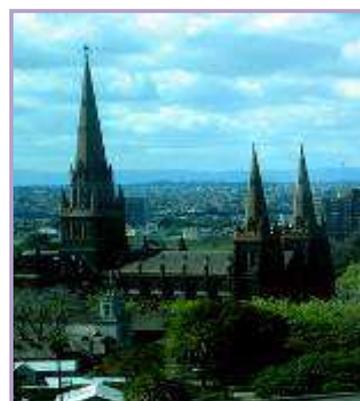
Bushfire Smoke, Air Quality & Health

Air quality assessment & community health protection messaging: an integrated approach

Department of Health and EPA Victoria



20 December 2006



Spring 2007

Photos of Melbourne by V. Lynch

February 2014

Purpose of this document:

This defines a protocol for the issuing of advisory warnings for potential health effects of bushfire smoke on the general population. These are health warnings endorsed by the Victoria Department of Health. EPA Victoria determines the nature and timing of the warnings, based on its monitoring and predictive functions. The warnings are in a prescribed format, pre-approved by the Chief Health Officer, Department of Health. They are to be issued as pro-forma Press Releases by the EPA Communications Unit.

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Glossary of Terms

Technical:

AQ	Air quality
PM₁₀	Airborne particles smaller than 10 micrometres in diameter; this is one of several air pollutants used when setting air quality objectives & goals
□g/m³	microgram per cubic metre

Agency:

CFA	Country Fire Authority (Victoria)
CHO	Chief Health Officer (Department of Health, Victoria)
DEPI	Department of Environment and Primary Industries (Victoria)
DH	Department of Health (Victoria)
DHS	Department of Human Services (Victoria)
EPA	Environment Protection Authority (Victoria)

Emergency related:

EMJPIC	Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee
SCC	State Control Centre (www.scc.vic.gov.au). This is Victoria's primary control centre for managing emergencies. It is managed by the Fire Services Commissioner Victoria and consists of a network of several regional and incident control centres.
SEMT	State Emergency Management Team; based at SCC.
VBIL	Victorian bushfire information line

Bushfire Smoke, Air Quality & Health: Advisory Messaging

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Part 1 – Review of 2012-2013 Summer fire season

1. Introduction

This integrated smoke, air quality and health protection messaging was established during the 2006/2007 summer fire season when extended or large area bushfires in the North East and Gippsland /Bairnsdale affected local regional air quality, and Melbourne Metropolitan areas.

During the season approximately 1.2 million hectares were burnt. Smoke from large fires in Tasmania and King Island also affected Victoria's air quality. Over 62 days from 1 December to 31 January:

- Melbourne experienced 15 days (24% of this time) with 24 hour levels of PM₁₀ above the health-based air quality standard of 50 µg/m³ and the highest single reading of 220 µg/m³ (20 Dec 2006).
- The Latrobe Valley experienced 16 days (26% of this time) above this health-based standard with the highest measured level of 254 µg/m³ (14 Dec 2006). This was the highest 24 hour value for PM₁₀ recorded by EPA Victoria during this fire season.
- North East Victoria, and Geelong were also heavily affected.

This review and the accompanying protocol has been prepared by the Environmental Health Program, Health Protection Branch of the Department of Health in consultation with EPA Victoria and other key stakeholders involved in this work.

2. Key health messages – Chief Health Officer (Department of Health)

The Chief Health Officer (CHO) provides health protection messages at a population level for a range of health hazards/health risks in the environment. For potential public health impacts of poor air quality from fires, the CHO relies on the monitoring and expert assessment of air quality undertaken by EPA Victoria. This is a coordinated effort.

Whether it is smoke from bushfires or from planned fires, the Environmental Health area of the Health Protection Branch works with key stakeholders in the development and review of public information and health protection advice that is matched to the audience, the context, and the degree of deterioration in air quality.

The following material was available for the previous summer season (ie 2012-13):

- Bushfire Smoke and your Health – Public Health information sheet [18 January 2013]
- EPA Victoria website – Bushfire Smoke and Air Quality [11 January 2013]
- Better Health Channel – Bushfire Smoke [24 January 2013]
- Smoke from planned burns – FireReady [September 2012]

Note: Environmental Health manages the health content of all four publications. Key messages about smoke and health protection are consistent across these documents.

3. Key messages, information and advice - summer fire season 2012/13

The following messages were used for the 3 levels of advice:

Level 0 (Normal business)

General health protection messages about smoke:

- a) Single sentence message for CFA fire messages – *[December 2012]*
- b) Community smoke exposure and public health messages - EMJPIC (Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee – Victoria Police) – *[22 January 2013]*
- c) Public Reminders (Smoke) - State Control Centre / Fire Services Commissioner *[January 2013]*
- d) Victorian Bushfire Information Line (VBIL) Script for call centre staff– Bushfire smoke & public health Frequency Asked Questions (FAQs) for 2012/13 summer fire season *[9 January 2013]*
- e) Bushfire Smoke and your Health – public health information sheet *[18 January 2013]*
- f) Better Health Channel – Bushfire smoke *[24 January 2013]*

Level 1 (Low Smoke Alert) and Level 2 (High Smoke Alert)

EPA Victoria – air quality monitoring and assessment of potential impacts of smoke on air quality:

- a) EPA Victoria template media release – LOW-LEVEL Smoke Advisory (Air quality unhealthy for sensitive groups) *[22 January 2013]*
- b) EPA Victoria template media release – HIGH-LEVEL Smoke Advisory (Air quality unhealthy for everyone) *[22 January 2013]*
- c) EPA Victoria – webpage – Bushfires Smoke and Air Quality *[11 January 2013]*

4. Operational protocols

The following operational protocols were used:

- a) Department of Health Operational Protocol – Integrated smoke, air quality and health protection advice 2012-2013. (Still valid until reviewed).
- b) EPA Victoria Operational Protocol – Covering assessment of air quality impacts, forecasting and smoke advisories. (Details attached, following reviews based on previous seasons).

Bushfire Smoke, Air Quality & Health: Advisory Messaging

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Part 2 – Information Used for Advisories

1. Introduction

The integrated smoke, air quality and public health protection messaging was established by EPA Victoria and the Department of Health (Environmental Health) during the 2006/2007 summer fire season when extended or large area bushfires in the North East and Gippsland /Bairnsdale affected local regional air quality and in Melbourne Metropolitan areas.

The following content approach is a refinement of the 2006/07 experience. It has been prepared by the Environmental Health Program, Health Protection Branch of the Department of Health in consultation with EPA Victoria and other key stakeholders involved in this work.

It is reviewed each year as part of planning prior to each fire season.

2. Smoke and health – an overview

Smoke from bushfires can lead to significant deterioration in air quality with high concentrations of fine particles and reduced visibility being the main concerns.

Smoke is a complex mixture of gases and fine particles produced by burning wood and other organic matter. Fine particles can get into eyes and respiratory systems and cause irritated eyes, a sore throat and runny nose.

In healthy people these effects disappear quickly once the smoke has cleared. Those with respiratory or heart conditions (such as congestive heart failure, angina, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, emphysema or asthma) are more sensitive to the effects of smoke. Exposure to particles can aggravate their condition and sufferers may experience symptoms at lower smoke levels than healthy people. Children and the elderly may also be more sensitive to the effects of smoke.

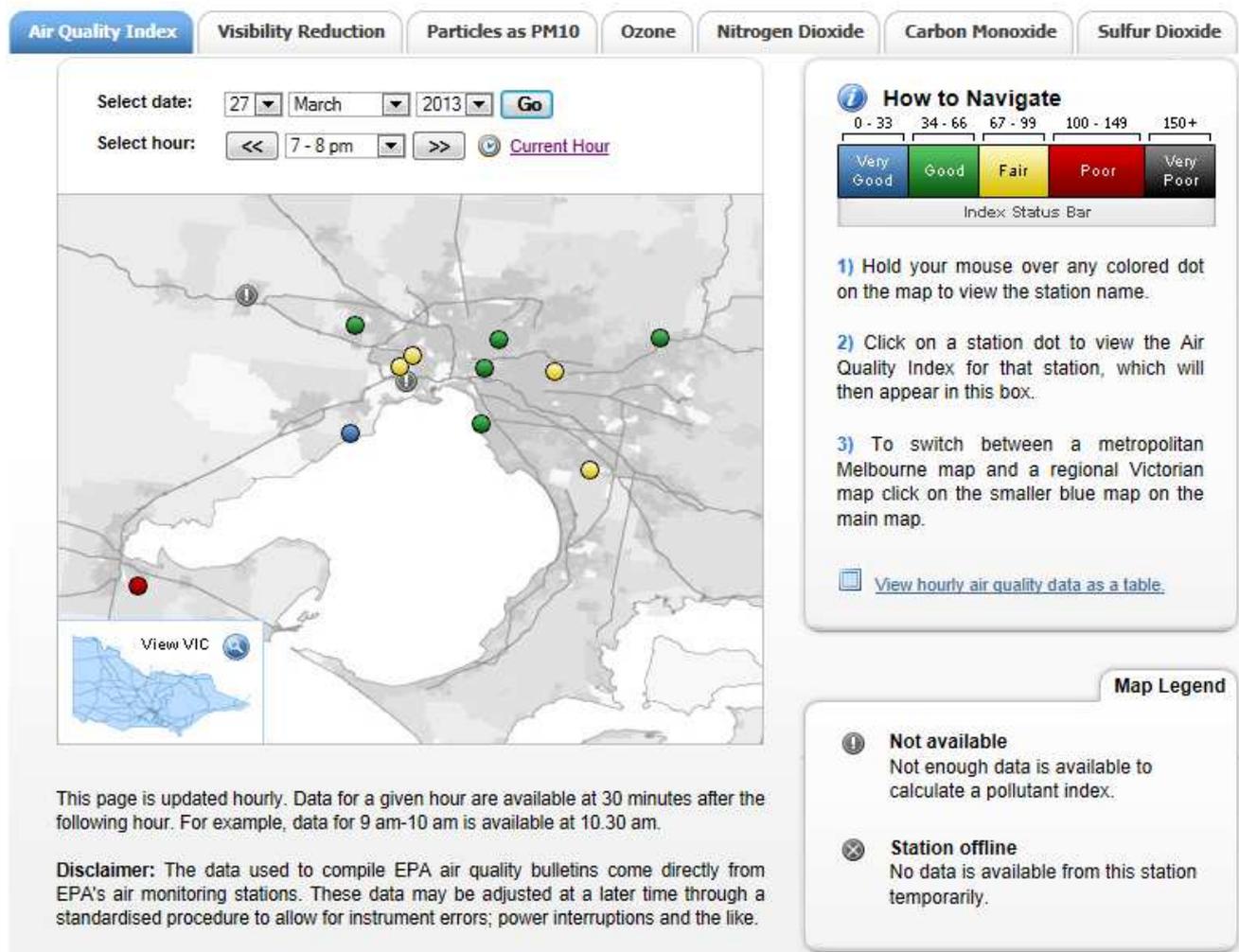
Everyone should minimise their exposure to smoke, where possible.

3. Sources of information about health effects from smoke

The Department of Health provides a range of public health protection messages and public information available to the community about smoke effects on its web site.

4. EPA Victoria role

EPA Victoria monitors air quality continuously in Melbourne (11 locations), Geelong and Latrobe Valley. During bushfire episodes, EPA makes use of satellite images and local reports of visual range to assess conditions in other populated areas of Victoria.



5. Air Monitoring Data – fine particles and reduced visibility

The main health-based air quality indicator that EPA Victoria monitors during smoky events is PM₁₀.

Together with the Department of Health, EPA Victoria has developed a system to categorise air quality measurements and provide advice on possible effects on peoples' health. Table 1 below provides advice on air quality categories.

These threshold levels are informed by research on the health impacts of smoke from bushfires and approaches adopted by overseas agencies for fires, smoke and health protection messaging.

The key driver of these thresholds is 24-hour average PM₁₀, with 1-hour average PM₁₀ and visibility as other supporting air quality measures.

Table 1: Bushfire advisory categories based on PM₁₀ monitoring and visibility

Bushfire smoke advisory level	Air Quality (AQ) Categories	PM10 (24 hour) $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	PM10 (1 hour) $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	Visibility (determined by observers)
Not applicable	Good	Less than 50	Less than 80	> 20 km
LOW	Unhealthy sensitive	51 to 65	81 to 175	< 20 km & > 10 km
HIGH	Unhealthy - all	66 to 155	176 to 300	< 10 km & > 5 km
HIGH	Very unhealthy - all	156 to 310	301 to 500	< 5 km & > 1 km
HIGH	Hazardous	> 310	> 500	< 1 km

Where air pollution monitoring data is available (see www.epa.vic.gov.au/our-work/monitoring-the-environment/air-quality-bulletins) these measurements can be used by members of the public to determine the applicable air quality category and identify what actions to take to reduce the risk of health effects arising from exposure to particles in the smoke.

The actions advised for each category are listed in Table 2.

6. Self-assessing air quality when monitoring data is not available

Increased particle levels lead to reduced visibility, therefore visibility can be used as a practical self-assessment indicator of air quality. Assess the air quality yourself using Table 2 below to decide what to do when smoke is in your area, as follows:

1. When there is no fire in the landscape, identify landmarks that are visible from your home at the distances shown in the categories in Table 2. For example, landmarks visible 20 kms or more (good), 10 kms (unhealthy sensitive); 5 kms (unhealthy all); 1km (very unhealthy – all) or less than 1 km away from you (hazardous).
2. Use the landmarks as a guide to estimate air quality in your area when smoke is present.
3. When you can no longer clearly see a landmark, air quality has deteriorated. Visibility is the distance of the nearest landmark that is just obscured by the smoke.

Refer to Table 2 for actions you might take to protect your health.

7. What are bushfire smoke advisory levels?

The bushfire smoke advisory levels refer to triggers for broader media messaging to the community about smoke and to inform people about the level of protective action they should follow to minimise the potential for health impacts.

There are two levels of Department of Health / EPA Media Release:

- LOW-LEVEL Bushfire smoke advisory – unhealthy for sensitive groups
- HIGH-LEVEL Bushfire smoke advisory – unhealthy for all

These EPA Victoria template media releases contain pre-endorsed quotes (i.e. health messages) on behalf of the Chief Health Officer, Department of Health.

Table 2: Cautionary advice and actions

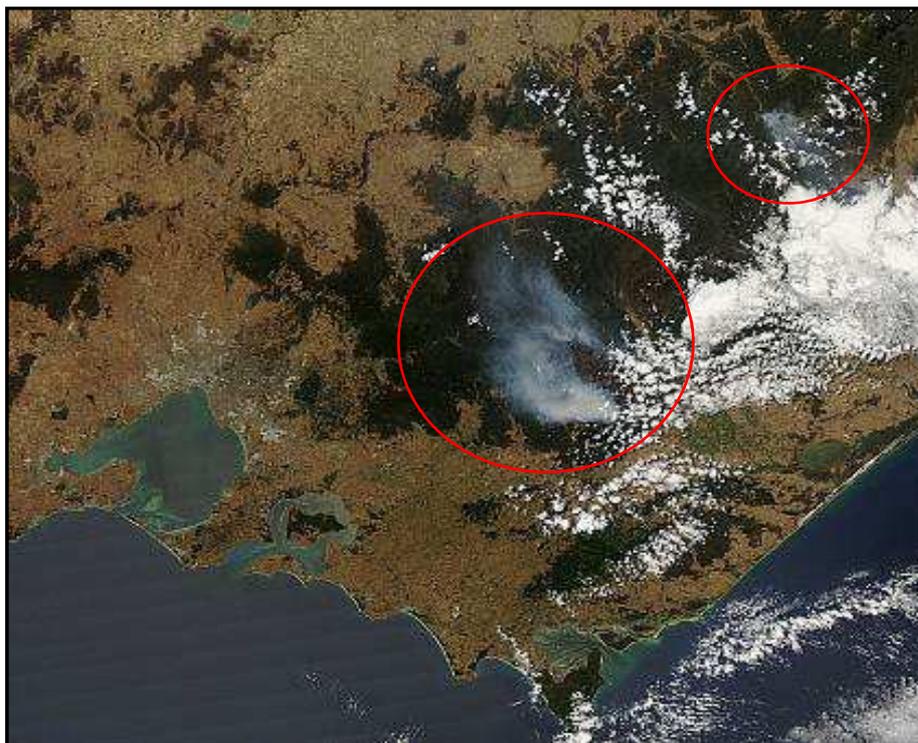
Bushfire smoke advisory level	Air Quality (AQ) Categories	Visibility	Landmark visible from home	Potential health effects	Cautionary health advice
No media release	Good	> 20 km	20 km or more	Meets the relevant air quality standard	None
LOW	Unhealthy - sensitive	< 20 km & > 10 km	10 km	People with lung or heart conditions, elderly, children	<p>People with heart or lung conditions, children and older adults should reduce¹ prolonged or heavy physical activity</p> <p>No specific message for everyone else other than sensitive groups.</p>
HIGH	Unhealthy - all	< 10 km & > 5 km	5 km	<p>Increased likelihood of effects for people with lung or heart conditions, elderly or children.</p> <p>General population respiratory symptoms</p>	<p>People with heart or lung conditions, children and older adults should avoid prolonged or heavy physical activity.</p> <p>Everyone else should reduce² prolonged or heavy physical activity.</p>
HIGH	Very unhealthy	< 5 km & > 1 km	1 km		<p>People with heart or lung conditions, children and older adults should avoid all physical activity outdoors.</p> <p>Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy physical activity.</p>
HIGH	Hazardous	< 1 km	Less than 1 km		<p>People with heart or lung conditions, children and older adults should remain indoors and keep activity levels as low as possible.</p> <p>Everyone should avoid all physical activity outdoors.</p>

¹ The key words relating to sensitive populations are highlighted in red. The bolding gives an idea of the increased level of health protection advice proportional to the decrease in air quality for these groups.

² The key words relating to people other than sensitive populations are highlighted in blue. The bolding gives an idea of the increased level of health protection advice proportional to the decrease in air quality for this group.

8. EPA Victoria smoke alert procedure

EPA Victoria monitors air quality continuously in Melbourne (11 locations), Geelong and Latrobe Valley. During bushfire episodes, EPA makes use of satellite images and local reports of visual range to assess conditions in other populated areas of Victoria.



Smoke from several fires affecting Victoria, 23rd January 2013 (smoke plumes highlighted).

EPA also forecasts air quality on a daily basis. During the bushfire season, the effects of large bushfires are accounted for in air quality forecasts, using the best available information.

When air quality in any major population centre (> 15,000 people) is expected to be seriously degraded due to bushfire smoke, an advisory will be issued (either LOW-LEVEL, or HIGH-LEVEL, depending on the expected severity).

Advisories will be issued when air quality conditions have already reached threshold levels, or are forecast to reach threshold levels, and when these air quality conditions are expected to persist for at least six hours.

Advisories will include pre-approved health messages (content provided by the Department of Health – see below).

To activate an advisory, emails will be sent to stakeholders (including the Department of Health, and a number of key stakeholders, including the Strategic Risk area of the State Control Centre (SCC)). A detailed forecast message will be provided on the front page of EPA's website. A media release (either LOW-LEVEL or HIGH-LEVEL) will be prepared, using the templates contained in this document, with appropriate information about the likely duration of the event.

9. Bushfire smoke advisories

When fires produce a large amount of smoke over an extended period, there may be broad scale impacts on air quality. Such impacts (i.e. deterioration in air quality, including visibility) have the potential to not only affect communities that are close to active fires but also cause problems further away in communities that are not necessarily under direct threat from fire hazards.

Bushfire smoke advisories were developed by EPA Victoria and this department and trialled during the 2006-07 fire season. The following two levels of advisory have been in place since then:

- Level 1 – LOW-LEVEL Smoke Advisory (media release) – *Unhealthy for sensitive people*
- Level 2 - HIGH-LEVEL Smoke Advisory (media release) – *Unhealthy all*

This approach is explained further in EPA Publication 1200 (January 2008 – Bushfires and Air Quality) and the corresponding webpage content titled [Bushfires and Air Quality](#).

Bushfire Smoke, Air Quality & Health: Advisory Messaging

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Part 3 – Key Health Messages

1. Introduction

The Chief Health Officer (CHO), Health Protection Branch provides population health protection messages on a range of health risks associated with communicable diseases, food safety, water safety, radiation and environmental health hazards.

In relation to fires, air quality and public health protection messages, the Environmental Health area of the Branch works - on behalf of the CHO - with key agency stakeholders involved in the preparedness, response and recovery phases of bushfires as well as planned burns associated with fuel reduction.

Stakeholders in this regard include, but not limited to:

- EPA Victoria (air monitoring & assessment / communications & media)
- DEPI Fire and Land Management (operations / planning / community engagement)
- CFA Victoria (community engagement / communications)
- Fire Services Commissioner – State Control Centre
- Victorian Bushfire Information Line
- DHS - Health & Human Services Emergency Management (communications)
- DH Health Command (*internal*)
- DH Media Unit (*internal*)
- NURSE-on-CALL via DH Primary Health (*internal*)

In relation to the monitoring and assessment of air quality, EPA Victoria is a key stakeholder in determining responsive air quality updates that then inform the degree (i.e. level) of public health protection messaging for the general population, especially sensitive subgroups (e.g. children, the elderly, and people with existing heart or lung conditions, including asthma).

The following general levels of health protection messaging apply for bushfire smoke impacts on air quality:

- Level 0 (normal business) – General health protection messages about smoke.
- Level 1 – LOW-LEVEL Smoke Advisory (media release) – *Unhealthy for sensitive people.*
- Level 2 - HIGH-LEVEL Smoke Advisory (media release) – *Unhealthy all.*

2. General health protection messages relating to smoke from bushfires

During the summer fire season where there is fire activity, there are a number of key sources of general messaging about smoke and health protection. The following smoke advice messages aim to raise community awareness, particularly for at-risk groups, and generally apply during fire events that are generally small in size; scale or duration.

1) CFA fire updates/alerts/warning messages – FireReady App and webpage

Advice: If you are experiencing smoke exposure, seek medical advice or call Nurse on Call on 1300 606 024.

2) Community smoke exposure messages – Emergency Management Joint Information Public Information Committee

- Bushfire smoke contains fine particles which can affect visibility as well as air quality.
- Smoke is an irritant.
- In healthy people irritant effects such as burning eyes, sore throat or a runny nose resolve quickly once they are away from the smoke.
- However, people with pre-existing heart or lung conditions including asthma, the elderly or children may be more sensitive to breathing in smoke.
- Limit prolonged or heavy physical activity
- Where practical, limit the amount of time spent outdoors in the smoke.
- Take their medication (as prescribed by your doctor).
- Asthmatics should follow their asthma management plan.

Anyone experiencing symptoms that may be due to smoke exposure, the Department of Health advises people to seek medical advice or call NURSE ON CALL on 1300 60 60 24.

For general information about how bushfire smoke potentially affects health and precautions to take to reduce exposure, visit <http://health.vic.gov.au/environment/bushfires-smoke.htm>

3) Talking points for media – Health information during bushfires (Department of Health)

Bushfire smoke and your health

- ✓ Smoke particles can affect air quality and visibility.
- ✓ People with existing lung or heart conditions should rest as much as possible and, keep away from the smoke and keep informed about fire activity in their immediate area.
- ✓ Minimise the amount of prolonged or heavy physical activity outdoors.
- ✓ Anyone with a lung or heart condition should follow the treatment plan advised by their doctor and keep at least 5 days of medication on hand.
- ✓ Asthmatics should follow their personal asthma plan.
- ✓ Air-conditioners should be switched to “recycle or recirculate” to reduce the amount of smoke drawn inside.
- ✓ If your home gets too hot or is letting in outside smoky air, try to take an air-conditioned break at a local community library or shopping centre.
- ✓ Anyone experiencing symptoms that may be due to smoke exposure should seek medical advice.
- ✓ Anyone experiencing difficulty breathing or chest pain should seek immediate medical assistance.

Bushfire Smoke, Air Quality & Health: Advisory Messaging

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Part 4 – Department of Health Operational Protocol

1. Objective

This protocol applies during periods of fire activity during the summer fire season. It identifies the primary recipients of information provided by EPA Victoria in relation to (a) general daily air quality as well as (b) when bushfire smoke advisories (i.e. media releases) are issued.

It aims to ensure timely and effective distribution of information, reducing where possible duplication of messaging to key health stakeholders.

2. Scope

The bushfire smoke advisory levels (i.e. Low or High) refer to triggers for messaging to the community about smoke and what the community should consider to reduce health impacts.

3. Department of Health - role and responsibilities

The Chief Health Officer (CHO), Health Protection Branch provides population health protection messages on a range of health risks associated with communicable diseases, food safety, water safety, radiation and environmental health hazards.

For potential public health impacts of poor air quality from fires, the CHO relies on the monitoring/assessment of air quality undertaken by technical expertise at EPA Victoria. Whether it is smoke from bushfires or planned fires, the Environmental Health area of the Health Protection Branch works (on behalf of the CHO) with key stakeholders in the development and review of public information and health protection advice that is proportional to the audience, context and degree of deterioration in air quality.

The Department of Health will review the processes and this protocol at their discretion, and advise EPA of any changes required.

Bushfire Smoke, Air Quality & Health: Advisory Messaging

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Part 5 – EPA Victoria Operational Protocol

1. Objective

This protocol applies during periods of fire activity during the summer fire season. It identifies the primary recipients of information provided by EPA Victoria in relation to (a) general daily air quality as well as (b) when bushfire smoke advisories (i.e. media releases) are issued. It aims to ensure timely and effective distribution of information, reducing where possible duplication of messaging to key health stakeholders.

2. Scope

The bushfire smoke advisory levels (i.e. Low or High) refer to triggers for messaging to the community about smoke and what the community should consider to reduce health impacts. EPA Victoria is responsible for managing air quality under the *Environment Protection Act 1970* and State Environment Protection Policies. As an adjunct to this it is in a position to monitor smoke occurrence in real time and provide the warnings.

3. Process for notifying Department of Health of an EPA Smoke Advisory

When air quality in an area deteriorates to a level requiring release of either a Low smoke advisory or a High smoke advisory, the process for notifying the Department of Health is the same.

1) Heads up from EPA to DH (Environmental Health) of impending advisory:

Specialist staff from the air monitoring and assessment team of EPA Victoria will contact senior staff in Environmental Health to advise of impending change to air quality due to smoke and confirm need to the issuing of a smoke advisory.

At this stage, Environmental Health will ensure that the Primary Health DH contacts for Nurse-on-Call are also advised as early as practically possible of an impending media release

2) Clarifying DH contact details on final draft EPA Media Release / advisory:

The EPA Media Unit will confirm the following details with representatives of the DH Media Unit:

- The Health Media contact number to go onto the bottom of the media release in the event there are media enquiries relating to health.
- The name and title of either Chief Health Officer or Acting Chief Health Officer.

3) Issuing EPA Smoke advisory:

When emailing the EPA Smoke Advisory to media outlets, the EPA Communications Unit will also send the same advice to the following:

Environmental Health, Health Protection Branch:

- vikki.lynch@health.vic.gov.au
- sandra.falconer@health.vic.gov.au

Public Health Emergency Operations Centre inbox:

- eocpublichealth@health.vic.gov.au

DH/DHS Communications:

- meredith.cameron@dhs.vic.gov.au

DH Media Unit:

- bram.alexander@health.vic.gov.au
- graeme.walker@health.vic.gov.au
- ian.haberfield@health.vic.gov.au

DH Primary Health (on behalf of NURSE-on-CALL):

- primaryhealthem@dhs.vic.gov.au

4. Managing media inquiries relating to health impacts of smoke

EPA will respond to media inquiries regarding the impact to air quality from bushfire smoke.

DH will respond to media enquiries regarding the impact of bushfire smoke on health.

EPA will refer all health related questions to the DH Media. The DH Media Unit contact will discuss request for information etc. with media outlet and also the Chief Health Officer and decide on further action, content of advice.

5. Health Command – Department of Health

When a Low or High level bushfire smoke advisory is issued by EPA Victoria, this will be forwarded to the Health Command inbox and the nominated DH representative attending the State Emergency Management Team (SEMT) meetings at the State Control Centre. This role updates the SEMT on this health protection messaging.

The media units of each agency will capture next day reports associated with smoke from fires and air quality. Similarly, the staff of Environmental Health (DH) and EPA's air monitoring and assessment team will also scan for level of impact of this messaging. This information will be consolidated and shared with the Chief Health Officer.

Put simply, when air quality impacts from bushfire smoke are likely to trigger certain predefined particle levels, EPA Victoria determines whether a LOW-LEVEL smoke advisory (i.e. media release) or a HIGH-LEVEL smoke advisory (i.e. media release) should go out to media outlets.

The template advisories, which contain health protection messages are endorsed for the 2013-14 season by the Chief Health Officer as follows:

LOW level bushfire smoke advisory template

EPA Media Release



Low level bushfire smoke advisory

DATE

EPA Victoria has issued a low level smoke alert for the [area] [duration e.g. tonight and tomorrow morning] as a result of bushfires.

A low level alert means that it is likely residents will see [ongoing] smoke impacts [for duration e.g. in the morning], with visibility reduced to between 10 – 20 kilometres due to high particle concentrations in the air.

The Victorian Chief Health Officer Dr Rosemary Lester advises the elderly, children and those with existing heart or lung conditions to limit prolonged or heavy physical activity.

“Where possible this sector of the community should also limit the time spent outdoors.” Dr Lester said.

“Anyone with a heart or lung condition should take their medication as prescribed by their doctor.

“People with asthma should follow their asthma management plan.

“Everyone should keep informed about fire activity in their immediate area. Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice or call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24.”

Check EPA’s air quality report at www.epa.vic.gov.au/our-work/monitoring-the-environment/air-quality-bulletins

For further information about bushfire smoke and health go to www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/bushfires/

For fire information go to the Victorian Bushfire Information Line 1800 240 667 or visit the Country Fire Authority Victoria website at www.emergency.vic.gov.au

Media inquiries:

- Air quality 03 9695 2704
- Health 03 9096 7296

HIGH level bushfire smoke advisory template

EPA Media Release



High level bushfire smoke advisory

DATE

EPA Victoria has issued a high level smoke alert for the [area] [duration as in tonight and tomorrow morning] as a result of bushfires.

A high level alert means that it is likely residents will see ongoing smoke impacts [for duration e.g. in the morning], with visibility less than 10 kilometres due to high particle concentrations in the air.

The Victorian Chief Health Officer Dr Rosemary Lester advises that excessive smoke levels can not only aggravate existing heart or lung conditions, but may also cause members of the community to experience irritated eyes, coughing or wheezing.

“Everyone should avoid prolonged or heavy physical activity and keep informed about fire activity in their immediate area” Dr Lester said.

“Anyone with a heart or lung condition should take their medication as prescribed by their doctor.

“People with asthma should follow their asthma management plan.

“Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice or call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24.”

Check EPA’s air quality forecasts at www.epa.vic.gov.au/our-work/monitoring-the-environment/air-quality-bulletins

For further information about bushfire smoke and health go to www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/bushfires/

For fire information go to the Victorian Bushfire Information Line 1800 240 667 or visit the Country Fire Authority Victoria website at www.emergency.vic.gov.au

Media inquiries:

- Air quality 03 9695 2704
- Health 03 9096 7296

Bushfire Smoke, Air Quality & Health: Advisory Messaging

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Part 6 – Key Contacts

EPA Victoria – all hours 1300 372 842 (24/7)

[Emergency Response Coordination:](#)

Elizabeth Radcliffe – Program Leader Emergency Response – 03 51739800

Chris Webb - Director Environmental Regulation 0396952762 0410 573 421

[Monitoring & Assessment Unit:](#)

Gavin Fisher – Program Leader (Air Quality) – 8458 2312 / 0477 396 894

Paul Torre - Principal Expert (Air Quality) – 8458 2313 / 0477 313 026

Sean Walsh - Senior Scientist (Air Quality) – 8458 2405 or 0419 511 328

Andrew Marshall – Science Project Officer (Air Quality) – 8458 2398

[Media Unit:](#)

Kate Gittings – 9695 2599 / 0447 109 940

Tanya O'Shea – 9695 2704 / 0411 116 079

Lauren Nowak– 9695 2881 / 0477387440

Department of Health – Health-related response during bushfires:

[Public Health Emergency Management:](mailto:eocpublichealth@health.vic.gov.au) (eocpublichealth@health.vic.gov.au)

Julian Meagher – 9096 2002 / 0401 142 128

[Environmental Health, Health Protection Branch](#)

Business hours (general) - 1300 761 874. After hours (On-call emergency page): 1300 790 733

Sandra Falconer – Manager Environmental Health – 9096-5105 / 0418 694 081

Vikki Lynch – Advisor Health Risk Management – 9096-5915 / 0407 931 336

Nathalie Allaz-Barnett – 9096 5148

Jason Issa – 9096 5619

[Media Unit:](#)

Bram Alexander – 9096 8803

Graeme Walker – 9096 7269

Ian Haberfield – 9096 7701

[NURSE on CALL:](mailto:primaryhealthem@dhs.vic.gov.au) (primaryhealthem@dhs.vic.gov.au)

Tim Buckley – 9096 7380

Barbara Whyte – 9096 7606