

Risk Communication During Wildfires

Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies
March 25, 2019

Woolsey Fire

- * Started November 8, 2018 - hills south of the City of Simi Valley
- * Hill fire also started the same day - northwest of the City of Thousand Oaks
- * Woolsey fire burned areas of the Santa Susana Field Lab

VCAPCD PM Monitoring

- * The District operates five BAM sites for PM_{2.5}, and two BAM sites for PM₁₀
- * Near real-time data is available
- * Monitoring staff provided weekend Air Quality Advisories
- * We now have timely Spanish language translation services

Woolsey Fire

- * Strong Santa Ana winds transported much of the smoke plume above and away from the populated areas of Ventura County.
- * Staff located a PM10 monitor (EBAM) at Thousand Oaks High School in anticipation of more Santa Ana winds (northeast) entraining ash. We did not experience ash entrainment after this fire.

EPA Guidance for Schools

- * **GREEN** – Be active outside
- * **YELLOW** – Be active outside. Students who are unusually sensitive to air pollution could have symptoms.
- * **ORANGE** – Ok to be active outside (short activities) recess and PE. Athletic practice: take more breaks, and conduct less intense activities.

EPA Guidance for Schools

- * **RED** – All activities: take more breaks, and conduct less intense activities. Consider moving longer and more intense athletic activities indoors or rescheduling them.
- * **PURPLE** - Move all activities indoors or reschedule them.

SB 1260/SB 901

- * California legislation regarding prescribed burning to prevent major wildfire damage
- * Leverage air district expertise from existing agricultural/prescribed burn permit programs, air monitoring and public information
- * Air district funding – assistance with preparing smoke management plans?

Proposed AB 661

Proposed California legislation to direct air districts in coordination with County Public Health Officers, offices of emergency services, school districts and regional planning agencies to prepare a wildfire smoke air pollution emergency plan.

Proposed AB 661

Current Bill language addresses:

- * Indoor air quality
- * Use of low-cost sensors
- * Short term air quality metrics – less than 24-hour averages
- * Tiered recommendations based on smoke intensity
- * Vulnerable populations: school children, elderly and people working outdoors

Woolsey Fire: SSFL

The Woolsey fire burned through a portion of the 2,850 acre Santa Susana Field Lab (SSFL), a former rocket engine testing and nuclear power research facility, which has chemical and radionuclide contamination. This led to significant community concern and requests for information.

Woolsey Fire: SSFL

- * VCAPCD posted information from:
 - * California Department of Toxic Substances Control
 - * U.S. Department of Energy
 - * Los Angeles Department of Public Health
- * Monitoring was performed by several agencies – radionuclides, metals, VOCs, PAHs and PCBs. Interim Summary Report has been issued.