



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 8, 2011

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### **WILD FIRE AIR QUALITY**

Pay attention to local air quality reports. Listen and watch for news or health warnings about smoke. The [Arizona Department of Environmental Quality](#) has a website where you can check the air quality in Springerville.

Refer to visibility guides particularly if you are in an area where there is no air monitor. Check out the [smoke table](#).

If you must be outside in a smoky area, healthy individuals may wish to wear a mask called a "particulate respirator." These resemble common dust masks but are substantially more effective at removing the airborne small particles produced from fires. Choose one that has two straps and has the words NIOSH N95 or NIOSH P100 printed on it and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. These types of mask can usually be found at hardware stores.

It is harder to breathe while wearing these masks, so check with your doctor before using one if you have heart or lung disease and take frequent rests if you must work. Do not use bandanas (wet or dry), paper masks, or tissues held over the mouth and nose as these are not effective and will not protect your lungs from wildfire smoke. N-95 or P-100 respirators work best when sealed closely to the face.

The most effective way to reduce exposure and avoid the ill effects of smoke is to stay indoors. Eliminate outdoor activities while air quality is in the unhealthy range. Exposure and the ensuing health effects are dependent on the amount of time spent outside, level of exertion, and air quality. Effects can be as mild as irritation of eye, nose and throat; and headache; or as serious as triggered asthma episodes or stresses on weakened cardiovascular systems.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a fact sheet on health threats and wildfire smoke. <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/facts.asp>

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