

# Be Smoke Ready: Protect Your Health and Community



Smoke from wildfires is a health concern for everyone. Being smoke ready means taking steps to protect yourself, your family and your community during periods of poor air quality. With a little preparation, you can reduce health risks and improve safety. Below, you'll find tips and resources to help you stay ready and protected.

## Why Smoke Readiness Matters

Smoke readiness is essential for protecting your health during wildfire season, as wildfire smoke can travel hundreds of miles and impact air quality for days or even weeks.

Exposure to fine particles, also called PM 2.5 in smoke, can cause serious respiratory issues, aggravate heart conditions, and affect at-risk groups.

Preparing in advance can reduce health risks and help you respond quickly when smoke levels rise.

## Understanding Smoke & Air Quality

Wildfire smoke is made up of harmful gases and fine particles, which can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream.

Smoke can cause short-term symptoms like coughing, eye irritation, and difficulty breathing, while long-term exposure increases the rate of heart and lung diseases.

Most healthy adults and children recover quickly from smoke exposure and will not suffer from long-lasting health effects. The EPA's Air Quality Index (AQI) measures pollution levels. The higher the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution and the greater the health concern.

## Who's Most at Risk?



Children are at a higher risk due to developing lungs and higher air intake relative to body weight.

Older adults and those with pre-existing conditions, such as asthma, COPD, or heart disease, are more likely to experience severe health conditions.



Pregnant individuals face higher risks from wildfire smoke, which can strain the heart and lungs, increase complications, and harm fetal development.



People with lower socioeconomic status are at a higher risk due to limited access to clean indoor air, healthcare, and protective resources.



Wildfire smoke can harm pets, causing breathing issues, eye irritation, and worsened health conditions.

Smoke conditions can change quickly, so it's important to monitor air quality using reliable sources like EPA's and US Forest Service [Fire.AirNow.gov](https://www.fire.airnow.gov).



# Be Smoke Ready: Ready, Set, Go!

## Ready - Prepare Ahead

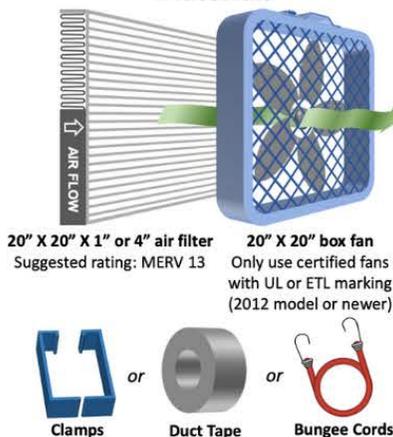
- **Know Your Air Quality**
  - Use trusted sources like [fire.airnow.gov](https://www.fire.airnow.gov) to see current conditions.
- **Create a Clean Air Space**
  - Set up an indoor space with an air purifier to reduce smoke exposure. You can either purchase an indoor air cleaner or assemble a DIY version using a box fan and MERV 13 furnace filters.
- **Stock up on Supplies**
  - Have masks (N95 or better), medications, and other essentials on hand.

## Set - Stay Informed

- **Monitor Conditions**
  - Check air quality daily and stay updated on wildfire risks.
  - Monitor visibility closely, as decreasing clarity may signal increasing wildfire smoke risk.
- **Adjust Activities**
  - Limit outdoor activities on smoky days, especially for at risk groups.
- **Communicate Plans**
  - Share readiness plans with family and neighbors.

### DIY Air Cleaner to Reduce Wildfire Smoke Indoors: Basic Design

#### Materials



#### Assembly

1. Attach the air filter to the back of the box fan using either clamps, duct tape or bungee cords.
2. Check the filter for the direction of the air flow (marked on the side of the filter).
3. Replace filters when dirty.



[epa.gov](https://www.epa.gov)

## Go! - Take Action

- **Protect Yourself**
  - Use your clean air space or leave the area if conditions worsen.
- **Help Others**
  - Check on vulnerable neighbors and share resources if possible.
- **Stay Safe**
  - Follow official guidance from local health and fire departments.

Your Ready, Set, Go! plan may look different depending on your individual needs and medical history.

Keep devices charged, monitor official updates, and check in with family/neighbors and local services for important information.

Smoke pollutants like PM2.5, ash, and silica can linger. Ventilate, clean surfaces, and replace air filters before returning.



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