



Oregon School Activities Association
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August 1, 2017

To: Superintendents, Principals, Athletic Directors and Coaches
From: Peter Weber, Executive Director
Subject: Recommendations for Outdoor Sporting Events Based on Air Quality and Visibility

As a result of the numerous forest fires throughout the state, the OSAA has worked to gather information for member schools regarding recommendations for outdoor sporting events based on air quality and visibility as it relates to environmental exposure for student-athletes and coaches. Please contact the OSAA office if you have any questions regarding this information at 503.682.6722.

OSAA INTERPRETATIONS

Due to the concerns about smoke problems as related to high school athletic practices and contests for the Fall season, the following interpretations are provided:

- The number of required practices for football cannot be waived. The legal ramifications of a waiver, which would occur because of the health/safety purposes of the practice rule, would be prohibitive.
- Any postponements, rescheduling or cancellations of contests must be arranged by the participating schools within the established dates for that sport's season.
- Sports seasons and cutoff dates will not be changed due to the impact such a change would have throughout the entire state, especially as it relates to overlapping with the Winter season.

RESOURCES

This memo includes guidelines for your use in making decisions for outdoor sporting events based on air quality and visibility. We strongly encourage schools to maintain contact with their local county health department regarding the rapidly changing conditions. Visit this link for contact information for each health department: <http://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PROVIDERPARTNERRESOURCES/LOCALHEALTHDEPARTMENTRESOURCES/Pages/lhd.aspx>.

The OSAA recommends that schools refer to the 2011 NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook regarding Air Quality and Exercise (posted at <http://www.osaa.org/docs/osaainfo/NFHSAirQuality.pdf>) for additional information.

We've also included an Air Quality Index / Visibility Record sheet for schools that want to have coaches record the conditions in their area prior to practices/events. This sheet is a resource and its use is not mandated by OSAA.

AIR QUALITY INDEX

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is the EPA's scale for rating air quality. It is a color coded tool that categorizes air quality. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) maintains air quality ratings that are updated hourly and can be accessed online at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/aqi>. In addition, the AirNow website (http://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.local_state&stateid=38&mapcenter=0&tabs=0) offers daily AQI forecasts as well as real-time AQI conditions.



FACT SHEET

Public Health Guidance for School Outdoor Activities During Wildfire Events

Check the local Air Quality Index (AQI) online (www.deq.state.or.us/aqi/index.aspx) and do a visual inspection outside.* Compare the AQI and visibility test to determine the air conditions in your community. Then, use the guide below to determine activity level for your students.

| Air Quality Index | Visibility Scale | Recess (15 min) | P.E. (1 hr) | Athletic Events and Practices (2–3 hrs) |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|--|--|--|
| Good | Over 15 miles | Great day to be active outdoors! | Great day to be active outdoors! | Great day to be active outdoors! |
| Moderate | 5–15 miles | It is a good day for students to be active outside. Watch students who are unusually sensitive to air pollution for symptoms of shortness of breath or coughing. | Watch students who are unusually sensitive to air pollution. Look for symptoms of shortness of breath or coughing. Monitor symptoms and reduce or cease activity if symptoms arise. | Watch students who are unusually sensitive to air pollution. Look for symptoms of shortness of breath or coughing. Increase rest periods and make substitutions for these students as needed. Monitor symptoms and reduce or cease activity if symptoms arise. |
| Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups | 3–5 miles | It is an OK day for students to be active outside. Allow students who are unusually sensitive to air pollution to stay indoors if they'd like. | Move activities for students sensitive to air pollution indoors. Limit other students to light outdoor activities or move them indoors. Increase rest periods and make substitutions. Monitor symptoms and reduce or cease activities if symptoms arise. | Move activities for students sensitive to air pollution indoors. Limit other students to light outdoor activities or move them indoors. Increase rest periods and make substitutions. Monitor symptoms and reduce or cease activities if symptoms arise. |
| Unhealthy | 1–3 miles | Consider keeping all students indoors or allowing only light outdoor activity. Move activities for students sensitive to air pollution indoors. | Move activities for students sensitive to air pollution indoors. Consider moving all activities indoors. Limit all students to light activities. Increase rest periods and make substitutions. | Consider any of the following: cancel the event. Move the event indoors. Postpone the event. Move the event to an area with “good” air quality. |
| Very Unhealthy/Hazardous | 1 mile or less | Keep all students indoors. | Move all activities indoors. Limit all students to light activities. Increase rest periods and make substitutions. | Do any of the following: cancel the event. Move the event indoors. Postpone the event. Move the event to an area with “good” air quality. |

*If you get conflicting results when you compare the AQI to your visual inspection, err on the side of caution. Follow the recommendations for the worse of the two assessments.

**Students with asthma action plans should follow them closely. They should monitor their breathing and exposure to wildfire smoke. Anyone experiencing symptoms should contact a health care provider for further advice. They should call 911 in an emergency.

Watch for symptoms

Wildfire smoke can make asthma symptoms worse. It can trigger asthma attacks. Symptoms of asthma include coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing and chest tightness. Even students without known asthma can have symptoms when exposed to unhealthy levels of wildfire smoke pollution.

Students with asthma should follow their Asthma Action Plan. This will help them decide if they need to take special precautions while engaging in outdoor activities. Athletes with asthma should have rescue inhalers readily available. Use should be as directed by their health care provider. Anyone experiencing symptoms should contact a health care provider. Call 911 in an emergency.

Air Quality Index

How clean or polluted the air is and the level of health concern is in the Air Quality Index (AQI). The AQI categorizes air quality based on air measures collected from Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) air monitors. For more about AQI in Oregon and how the AQI is calculated, go to www.deq.state.or.us/aqi/index.aspx.

Visibility Scale

In addition to the AQI, you can use your own observations to determine the air conditions in your area. To do a visual inspection:

- Go outside
- Face away from the sun
- Determine the limit of your visible range by looking at objects at known distances (miles). Visible range is the point at which even high contrast objects totally disappear.



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OHA website: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/Preparedness/Prepare/Pages/PrepareForWildfire.aspx>
OHA Facebook: www.facebook.com/OregonHealthAuthority
OHA Twitter: www.twitter.com/OHAOregon

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact Health Security, Preparedness and Response at 971-673-1315 or email health.security@state.or.us. We accept all relay calls or you can dial 711.

Children and Air Pollution

Children are particularly sensitive to smoke because their respiratory systems are still developing. In addition, their airways are smaller, and they breathe in more air per pound body weight. Children who may be more sensitive to air pollution include those with:

- Asthma
- Respiratory infection
- Lung or heart disease

Parents of these children should follow their health care providers advice about prevention and treatment of symptoms. Parents should also watch the smoke forecast to decide when to limit their child's activities.

School closures

School closures are the decision of the individual school district, usually in consultation with the local health department. Consult your local health department if you have questions about air pollution and health.

More information

For more information on how wildfire can affect your health, see: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/Preparedness/Prepare/Pages/PrepareForWildfire.aspx>.

Consult with your local or tribal health authority if you have questions about air pollution and health.