

## VCAPCD Wildfire Smoke Text/Audio Alert System for Farmworkers FAQ

### What is this program?

- The Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, in partnership with the County of Ventura's County Executive Office, Agricultural Commissioner, and the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE), a non-profit organization, have developed a first-of-its-kind text/audio alert system for farmworkers to alert the farmworker community when air quality reaches unhealthy levels in areas of Ventura County due to wildfire smoke. The text alert system will release air quality notifications to farmworkers and recommendations for N95 mask usage in real-time as the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaches 151 (unhealthy) and 501 (hazardous) due to wildfire smoke, consistent with the Cal OSHA regulations.
  - <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/doshreg/Protection-from-Wildfire-Smoke/Wildfire-smoke-emergency-standard.html>

### What is the Air Quality Index (AQI)?

- The Air Quality Index (AQI) is the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) index for reporting air quality.
  - For more information in English:
    - <https://www.airnow.gov/aqi/aqi-basics/>
  - For more information in Spanish:
    - <https://www.airnow.gov/aqi/aqi-basics-in-spanish/>

### Who is this for?

- This text/audio alert system is designed for agricultural frontline workers as well as field supervisors in Ventura County.

### What are the health risks of wildfire smoke for outdoor workers?

- A great resource on wildfire smoke prevention is the UC Davis Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety. The site includes brochures, training, and is available in both English and Spanish. More info here <https://aghealth.ucdavis.edu/wildfires>
- Please refer to the EPA for wildfire smoke health risks here:

- <https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/how-smoke-fires-can-affect-your-health>

### **How do I sign up?**

- For English text alerts, text SMOKE to 855-522-0034. You will know you are signed up correctly if you receive this message.



- For Spanish text alerts or Mixteco/Zapoteco audio alerts, text HUMO to 855-522-0034. You will know you are signed up correctly if you receive this message.



- If you would like both English and Spanish/Mixteco/Zapoteco alerts, please text SMOKE and HUMO as two separate texts to 855-522-0034.

### **Does this cost anything?**

- This text/audio alert system is being provided at no cost to the subscriber
  - However, phone provider standard messaging fees may apply. Please check with your phone provider.

## When will I receive messages?

- You will receive a message anytime the AQI is 151 or greater (unhealthy conditions) and another message when the AQI is 501 or greater-(hazardous conditions) due to wildfire smoke.
- You may receive multiple messages in one day. Examples include:
  - If AQI reaches 151 and later reaches 501 in the same day due to wildfire smoke
  - If the wind shifts and wildfire smoke moves into more cities
  - If a new wildfire starts in a different city in the same day

## Why will messages be sent when AQI is greater than or equal to 151 and again when AQI is greater than or equal to 501 due to wildfire smoke?

- This text/audio alert system is designed to follow Cal OSHA's regulation in the California Code of Regulations, title 8, section 5141.1, which establishes AQI of 151 and 501 as the trigger points for when employers are required to provide N95 masks for voluntary and mandatory use, respectively.
  - [https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5141\\_1.html](https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5141_1.html)

## What will the messages look like?

- When AQI reaches 151 or 501 due to wildfire smoke, you will receive a text message that may include images and links and indigenous audio files if you signed up for Spanish text alerts.



### **What are the city abbreviations?**

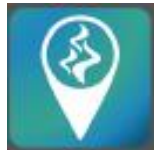
- City names will be abbreviated due to limited amount of text characters.
- City abbreviations are as follows (in alphabetical order):
  - CAM: Camarillo
  - FILL: Fillmore
  - MRPK: Moorpark
  - NP: Newbury Park
  - OJ: Ojai
  - OX: Oxnard
  - SP: Santa Paula
  - SV: Simi Valley
  - TO: Thousand Oaks
  - VTA: Ventura

### **Will I receive a message when the AQI is no longer 151 or greater as well as when it is no longer 501 or greater due to wildfire smoke?**

- No. This system is designed to alert you when air quality deteriorates due to wildfire smoke and the AQI values specified in the Cal OSHA regulation are exceeded in each day. If conditions persist the following day, you will receive another message.
- It is your responsibility to determine when it is appropriate to no longer wear an N95 mask. We recommend checking the CARB Smoke Spotter or AirNow app for up-to-date air quality in your area.

### **What is CARB Smoke Spotter and AirNow?**

- CARB Smoke Spotter is a new app that offers a live aerial map view of all AQI stations in your region along with smoke locations and a 24-hr forecast.
- CARB Smoke Spotter can be downloaded here:  
<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/news/california-air-resources-board-releases-california-smoke-spotter-2>



- AirNow is an EPA program that is designed to provide current air quality data as well as forecasted air quality data.
- You can use AirNow through a web browser ([www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov)) or through your mobile phone via the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.



- For more information regarding AirNow, please refer to:  
<https://www.airnow.gov/how-to-use-this-site/>

### **What if I see/smell smoke and do not get a text or do not see/smell smoke but do receive a text?**

- Once the AQI reaches 151 anywhere in Ventura County due to wildfire smoke, you will receive a text message. The text message will specify what cities are affected. Please verify if one of the affected cities is your location.
- In addition, you should use common sense. Often you will see or smell wildfire smoke before the AQI reaches 151. Although the regulation only requires employers to provide N95 masks at an AQI of 151, it can be a good idea to wear one at lower levels to reduce your exposure, especially if you have medical conditions such as asthma or heart problems, etc.

### **How do I unsubscribe from the text/audio alert system?**

- To unsubscribe, text STOP to 855-522-0034.



- If in the future you decide to re-subscribe to the text/audio alert system, make sure to text UNSTOP to 855-522-0034. If you do not do this step, your phone will continue to block messages from the number.
- This is the same process for both the English and Spanish text options. These are automated messages that we cannot change or translate into Spanish.

### **Who do I contact for questions that were not answered in the above?**

- If you still have questions, please contact VCAPCD at 805-303-3889 or email [info@vcapcd.org](mailto:info@vcapcd.org)