
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 4th, 2025

BLDHD Encourages Air Quality Awareness and Preparedness Amid Ongoing Wildfire Smoke

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department (BLDHD) is encouraging residents to stay informed and take precautions as wildfire smoke continues to affect air quality across Michigan. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) has issued an air quality alert for Wednesday, June 4, with much of the state, including Benzie and Leelanau counties, experiencing unhealthy air conditions.

Air quality in the region is currently rated as **“Unhealthy for Everyone,”** levels due to fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) from ongoing wildfires in Canada. These microscopic particles in smoke can travel deep into the lungs and pose significant health risks, especially for sensitive groups.

“The smoky haze and strong odor in the air are visible signs of a problem that can impact health,” said Dan Thorell, BLDHD Health Officer. “We want all residents to be aware of changing air conditions and to take protective steps when needed—especially children, older adults, pregnant people, and those with heart or lung conditions.”

Key Protective Actions Include:

- **Stay indoors** as much as possible when air quality is poor. Keep windows and doors closed.
- **Use high-efficiency air filters** (MERV-13 or better) in home ventilation systems or portable air purifiers to improve indoor air quality.
- **Monitor local air quality conditions** using reliable tools like the EPA Fire and Smoke Map.

“Conditions can change quickly depending on wind and weather patterns,” said Dr. Joshua Meyerson, BLDHD Medical Director. “We encourage residents to regularly check air quality levels and adjust their activities accordingly to reduce health risks.”

Air Quality Index (PM 2.5) Overview:

- **Moderate (51–100):** Acceptable for most, but unusually sensitive people may experience symptoms.
- **Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101–150):** Sensitive individuals should limit outdoor exertion.
- **Unhealthy (151–200):** Everyone should reduce or limit long outdoor activities.
- **Very Unhealthy (201–300):** All individuals should avoid outdoor activity; sensitive groups should stay indoors.
- **Hazardous (301–500):** Everyone should remain indoors and avoid physical activity outside.

Health Symptoms to Watch For:

Coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing, chest pain, fatigue, or palpitations may be signs of smoke-related illness. Individuals with asthma or heart disease should follow their medical action plans and contact a healthcare provider if symptoms worsen.

BLDHD will continue to share updates as conditions evolve. For up-to-date air quality information and safety tips, visit www.airnow.gov or [BLDHD’s Enviromental Health Alerts](#).

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