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PIN 20-27-CCP

TO: ALL CHILD CARE FACILITY LICENSEES AND PROVIDERS

FROM: ***Original signed by Pamela Dickfoss***  
PAMELA DICKFOSS  
Deputy Director  
Community Care Licensing Division

SUBJECT: **AIR QUALITY IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS DURING WILDFIRES**

**Provider Information Notice (PIN) Summary**

PIN 20-27-CCP provides information regarding air quality during wildfires and guidance for child care settings.

According to the California Air Resource Board (CARB) wildfire smoke, which is composed of a complex mixture of air pollutants, is unhealthy to breathe and can be worse for children, the elderly, pregnant women and people with heart or respiratory conditions. Children breathe more air per minute than adults, and have lungs that are still developing, which makes them especially vulnerable to health effects of smoke during wildfires. There is an increased risk for children that are very young, who have respiratory diseases or children with underlying cardiovascular disease. In children with asthma, worsening of asthma symptoms or heightened risk of asthma attacks may occur.

The National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education states it is a best practice for supervising adults to check [the air quality index \(AQI\)](#) each day and use the information to determine whether it is safe for children to play outdoors. On days where smoke from wildfires is of concern, providers should check their local [air quality report](#) for their local AQI to best determine potential health hazards associated with local or regional air pollution. As a precaution during times air quality is unhealthy, child care centers or family child care homes providers should limit outdoor activities when children are in care. It is

important to note, not all masks protect from smoke. Most cloth masks used to protect against COVID-19 do not filter small smoke particles. If indoor air quality is of concern the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) issued a [Wildfire Smoke Factsheet for Indoor Air Filtration](#).

According to CARB and the California Department of Public Health, the following steps will help reduce indoor exposure to wildfire smoke. These steps are applicable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Stay indoors with the windows and doors closed.
- If you have a central ducted air conditioning and heating system, run the system while keeping the fresh-air intake closed to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside, and if possible install a high efficiency filter with a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) rating as high as the manufacturer of the system recommends. A MERV 13 rating is ideal.
- Do not run swamp coolers or whole house fans.
- Consider using a portable air cleaner, which can greatly reduce indoor particle levels to further reduce impacts from smoke.
  - All portable air cleaners sold in California must be certified by CARB to ensure they meet ozone emissions standards. Breathing ozone poses serious health risks. CARB provides a list of [CARB certified portable air cleaners](#).
  - It is important to select an effective portable air cleaner in order to reduce indoor exposure to smoke. The US Environmental Protection Agency provides guidance on how to select portable air cleaners: [Air Cleaners, HVAC Filters, and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/air-cleaners-and-air-filters-home>
- Avoid activities that increase indoor pollution, such as vacuuming, using harmful chemicals, or using gas stoves.

Resources for more information related to Wildfires, Children & COVID-19:

American Academy for Pediatrics:

- [Wildfires: Information for Parents](#)

Centers for Disease Control:

- [Guidance on Wildfire Smoke and Children](#)
- [Wildfire Smoke and COVID-19](#)

California Air Resource Board:

- [Update on California Wild Fires and Air Quality](#)

California Department of Public Health:

- [Studying Health Impacts of Wildfires](#)

Environmental Protection Agency:

- [Protecting Children from Wildfire Smoke and Ash](#)

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education

- [Ensuring Access to Fresh Air Indoors](#)
- [Protection from Air Pollution While Children are Outside](#)

UCSF:

- [Resources on Wildfire's and Children's Health](#)

State of California

- [COVID-19 Update Guidance: Child Care Programs and Providers](#)

If you have any questions, please contact your [local Regional Office](#).