



Renfrew County and District Health Unit
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

Memorandum

Date: June 5, 2025
To: Healthcare partners and school boards
From: Dr. Jason Morgenstern
Subject: Special Air Quality Statement

A special air quality statement has been issued for Renfrew County and District (RCD). Smoke is causing, or is expected to cause, poor air quality and reduced visibility. Wildfire smoke is expected over the area today. The potential for ground level smoke may continue tonight into Friday for some areas.

Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) is recommending that organizations continue to monitor the air quality as wildfires persist in western Canada. There remains a risk of ongoing or delayed health effects from poor air quality, which could lead to increased visits to emergency departments in the coming days.

High-Risk Populations

Certain individuals are more vulnerable to health impacts from poor air quality, including:

- Older adults
- Pregnant people
- Infants and young children
- People who work outdoors
- Individuals engaging in strenuous outdoor exercise
- Those with existing illnesses or chronic health conditions, such as:
 - Cancer
 - Diabetes
 - Lung or heart conditions

Reduce exposure to these populations if possible.

Monitoring Air Quality

- Check [Weather Information - Environment Canada](#) for special air quality statements in RCD.

- Refer to the [Air Quality Health Index \(AQHI\)](#) for updates from the nearest air monitoring station.
- Ontario has 39 air monitoring stations, but none are located within RCD. The closest stations are **Ottawa, North Bay, and Dorset**.
- Air quality can change rapidly during wildfire events—visit Ontario's AQHI website ([Air Quality Health Index \(AQHI\)](#)) regularly for real-time updates.

RCDHU continues to monitor the situation.

To help guide your actions, please use the Air Quality Health Index Categories and Health Measures table below.

Health Risk	Air Quality Health Index	Health Messages	
		At Risk Population*	General Population
Low	1 - 3	Enjoy your usual outdoor activities.	Ideal air quality for outdoor activities.
Moderate	4 - 6	Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you are experiencing symptoms.	No need to modify your usual outdoor activities unless you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.
High	7 - 10	Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also take it easy.	Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.
Very High	Above 10	Avoid strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also avoid outdoor physical exertion.	Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors, especially if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.

Protective Measures

- **Indoor Safety:** Keep windows and doors closed as much as possible. During extreme heat events with poor air quality, prioritize staying cool.
- **Improving Indoor Air:** Use a clean, good-quality air filter in your ventilation system or a certified portable air cleaner to filter fine particles from wildfire smoke.
- **Outdoor Protection:** If you are spending time outdoors, wearing a well-constructed, well-fitting, and properly worn respirator-type mask (such as a NIOSH-certified N95 or

equivalent) can help reduce exposure to fine particles. Even though exposure may be reduced, there can still be risks to health.

For more information, visit [Emergency Preparedness | Renfrew County and District Health Unit \(rcdhu.com\)](https://www.rcdhu.com).

If you have any questions, please contact RCDHU at 613-732-3629 extension 505.