



MEMBER ALERT

Cal/OSHA Emergency Regulation to Protect Outdoor Workers from Wildfire Smoke in Effect

August 1, 2019

On July 29, 2019, Cal/OSHA's emergency regulation requiring employers to protect workers from hazards associated with wildfire smoke is now in effect.

The emergency regulation will be effective for one year and applies to workplaces where the current Air Quality Index (AQI) for airborne particulate matter (PM) is 151 or greater, and where employers should reasonably anticipate that employees could be exposed to wildfire smoke.

The [emergency regulation](#), effective through January 28, 2020 with two possible 90-day extensions, applies to workplaces where the current Air Quality Index (AQI) for airborne particulate matter (PM 2.5) is 151 or greater, and where employers should reasonably anticipate that employees could be exposed to wildfire smoke.

Under the new regulation, employers must take the following steps to protect workers who may be exposed to wildfire smoke:

- Identify harmful exposure to airborne particulate matter from wildfire smoke before each shift and periodically thereafter by checking the AQI for PM 2.5 in regions where workers are located.
- Reduce harmful exposure to wildfire smoke if feasible, for example, by relocating work to an enclosed building with filtered air or to an outdoor location where the AQI for PM 2.5 is 150 or lower.
- If employers cannot reduce workers' harmful exposure to wildfire smoke so that the AQI for PM 2.5 is 150 or lower, they must provide:
 - Respirators such as N95 masks to all employees for voluntary use, and
 - Training on the new regulation, information about the health effects of wildfire smoke, and the safe use and maintenance of respirators.

This new regulation exempts employees exposed to a current AQI for PM2.5 of 151 or greater for an hour or less during a shift, and firefighters engaged in wildland firefighting.

Examples of N95 Masks

