



11 August 16

MEMORANDUM

From: Director, Occupational Safety, Health and Environmental, Naval Postgraduate School

Subj: AIR QUALITY OF MONTEREY BAY AREA, AND HEALTH CONCERNS

Good morning, NPS Staff, Faculty and Students.

There have been many questions and concerns today regarding the air quality of Monterey Bay Area, and health concerns.

What is the Hazard:

The primary hazard is from an increase in Particulate material coming from ash and smoke in the air. Particulate material in the air and effects of this ash are similar to other particulate material such as pollen, dust, sand, ect.

Who is at risk:

While we all are at a certain health risk form particulate material exposure, the populations mostly at risk (those which would present exacerbated negative health effects) are those with upper respiratory disorders (asthma and allergies), the very young, the elderly, individuals with compromised immune systems, and individuals with heart and/or lung conditions.

Controls:

For all populations, the principal control is to avoid and/or limit exposure by staying indoors, using the recirculation function while in their vehicles, closing windows and for personnel with heart or lung disease to avoid heavy exertion either indoors or out.

Personal use of Dust Masks:

The NPS and NSAM Safety Offices do not provide dust masks, and are reticent to recommend such as primary control. Since a false sense of safety might be inferred, further putting individuals at risk from behaviors that would not be otherwise undertaken.

However, if an individual wishes to purchase a disposable dust mask, they are not discouraged from doing so but the masks do not provide full protection and its limitations must be understood, ergo: a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.

If someone does wish to wear a dust mask, they are advised to use one of the masks that are NIOSH approved. (NIOSH approval can be found on the item packaging and/or the dust mask itself)

A list of approved masks may be found on this website:

http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/n95list1.html . As well personnel should read and understand appendix D of 29 CFR 1910.134

https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9784

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Again: The principal control is to avoid and reduce exposure by staying indoors, using the recirculation function while in their vehicles, maintain windows closed and for personnel with heart or lung disease to avoid heavy or prolonged exertion.

Current Conditions:

The EPA has a website tool which can be used to current air quality conditions of California. https://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.local_state or <http://mbard.org/air-quality/>

As of this morning, the conditions for the Monterey Peninsula are listed as “Moderate” and the EPA is advising that “unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.” Please note that if you live in the Carmel Valley Area the conditions are listed as “Unhealthy.” People in this area with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.

It is advised that people living in the “moderate” and “unhealthy” status areas keep their windows and doors closed to avoid smoke intrusion inside.

Outdoor activities, including PT, should be reduced or avoided and not resumed until conditions return to a no noticeable smoke odor “Green” status.

Additional Information:

We are working on building a webpage to provide additional information and guidance during this time.

For any questions, concerns, or if further assistance is needed please contact LCDR Colón, CIH, CSP, CHMM at ajcolon@nps.edu or safety@nps.edu.



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