During a wildfire, smoke can make the air in your home

unhealthy to breathe

City of
Fort Collins

Smoke from wildfires negatively impacts outdoor air quality, health and can impact your indoor air quality even if the fire is miles away.

The smoke from the wildfire is made up of gases and fine particles which can get into your eyes, lungs and bloodstream and cause health issues.

Fine particles can cause burning eyes, runny nose, bronchitis, and trigger shortness of breath, asthma attacks and heart attacks. They can also aggravate chronic heart/lung disease and there have been links to premature deaths in these individuals.

Groups whose health is at greatest risk:

- Children
- Adults over 65
- Pregnant people
- Outdoor workers
- People with chronic health conditions
  - Such as lung/heart disease, asthma, COPD etc.
- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Those who have limited access to healthcare

If you can say yes to any of these, you are being impacted by smoke:

1. visibility check: can you see or smell smoke
2. look for landmarks: if there is smoke and you cannot see more than 5 miles (e.g., you cannot see the CSU "A" by Horsetooth)

**How wildfire smoke affects indoor air quality:**

Fine particles can get into your home through:

- open/cracks in windows or doors
- bathroom/kitchen fans that are meant to take air out
- heating, ventilation
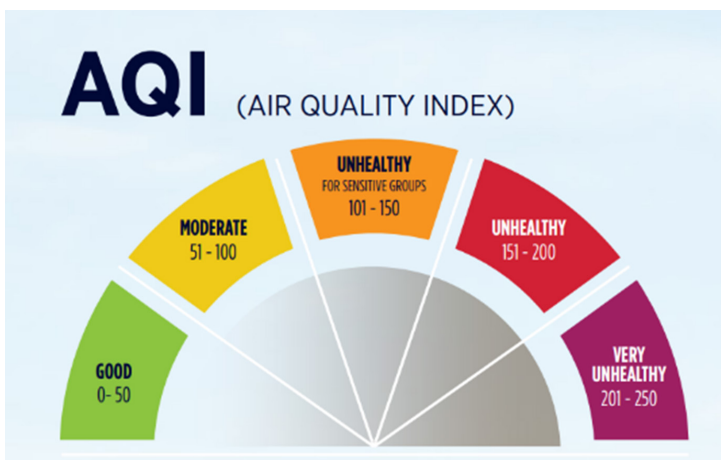
Check outdoor air quality conditions:

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a standard set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and used to report five major pollutants: ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide.

fcgov.com/aqdata

Follow this QR code to check the daily AQI in Fort Collins:
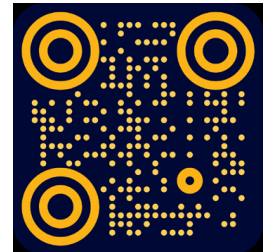
What to do during a wildfire:

1. Stay indoors as much as possible during wildfires, keep windows and doors closed
3. Avoid activities/anything that could add to indoor air pollution such as vacuuming, smoking, using gas/propane/wood stoves, spraying aerosol products, frying food, burning candles, etc.

   - Create a clean air room
     Choose a room (such as a bedroom) and keep windows and doors closed
   - Allow for easy access in and out; keep doorways free of obstacles
   - Stay cool with fans or air conditioning and set it to recirculate mode
   - Filter the air with a portable air cleaner in the room

4. Continue to check the AQI daily

   - During periods of better air quality (AQI 100, moderate level or below) you can open windows to air out your home and reduce indoor air pollution

5. Have a plan and be prepared to leave if you do not have an air conditioner, or the electricity goes out and it is going to be too hot to stay in your home. Know where you will go.

AQI (AIR QUALITY INDEX)

GOOD 0-50
MODERATE 51-100
UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS 101-150
UNHEALTHY 151-200
VERY UNHEALTHY 201-250

Create your own portable air cleaner:

https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/create-clean-room-protect-indoor-air-quality-during-wildfire

Tips for DIY air cleaners

1. Use a newer box fan model (2012 or later)

2. The fan should meet the UL 507 safety standard/ equivalent (look for UL or ETL safety marking/label)

3. Change the filter regularly during smoke events, keep extras on hand and when the filter starts to look dirty/releases smoke odors replace the filter

4. Follow box fan's manufacturer and safety instructions

5. Turn off the fan while sleeping and when you are not home

6. Only use when impacted by smoke, they are not recommended for regular use

7. DIY air cleaners are most effective in a small room (such as a clean air room)

Additional Resources:

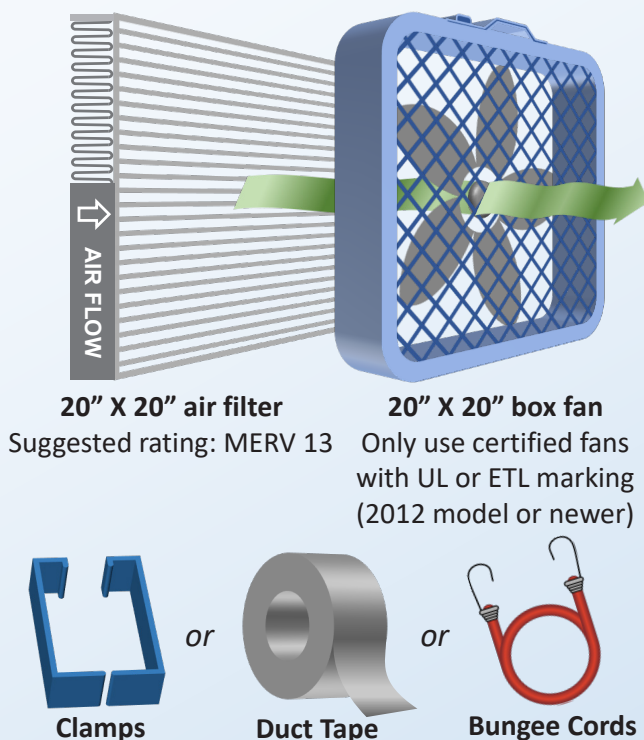EPA's fire and smoke map to determine if a fire is nearby: *https://fire.airnow.gov/*

NOCO alerts for wildfire evacuation and other emergency alerts: *nocoalert.org*

Colorado air quality alerts: *www.colorado.gov/airquality/request_alerts.aspx*

DIY Air Cleaner to Reduce Wildfire Smoke Indoors

Materials

AIR FLOW

20" X 20" air filter
Suggested rating: MERV 13

20" X 20" box fan
Only use certified fans with UL or ETL marking (2012 model or newer)

or

or

Clamps

Duct Tape

Bungee Cords

Assembly

1. Attach the air filter to the back of the box fan using either clamps, duct tape or bungee cords.

2. Check the filter for the direction of the air flow (marked on the side of the filter).

3. Replace filters when dirty.