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Maine Health Alert Network (HAN) System

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

To: All HAN Recipients
From: Maine CDC on behalf of Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Subject: **Maine DEP issues Air Quality Alert for Sunday, June 25**
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Maine DEP issues Air Quality Alert for Sunday, June 25

Particle pollution concentrations are expected to reach Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups level Sunday according to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). A cold front is dropping down out of Canada bringing smoke from the fires in Quebec with it. Smoke will begin to move into the northern region after midnight Saturday night. It is expected to move south and west during the day on Sunday. The likelihood is that areas of Maine away from the coast will have some degree of smoke and it may be heavy at times. The Coast has the potential to reach the Moderate range on the Air Quality Index. Monday's forecast is predicted to be Moderate for particle pollution due to the fact that smoke can take some time to clear out.

At elevated particle pollution levels, children, healthy adults who exert themselves, and individuals suffering from a respiratory disease such as asthma, bronchitis or COPD can experience reduced lung function and irritation. When this happens, individuals may notice a shortness of breath, coughing, throat irritation, and/or experience an uncomfortable sensation in their chest. Additionally, those with a heart disease should also follow these recommendations.

Some actions you can take to protect your health during periods of unhealthy air quality include:

- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity.
- If you are exposed to heavy smoke or have health-concerns that might be worsened by smoke, consider wearing an N95 or KN95 mask. If you do not have one on hand, any well-fitting mask would likely help reduce some of the particles potentially inhaled into the lungs.
- If you are indoors, close windows and circulate indoor air with a fan or air conditioner.

- The Maine CDC Asthma Prevention and Control Program has asthma information available at their web site: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/mat/>
- For more information on asthma control visit EPA's Web site www.epa.gov/asthma to find information about asthma triggers and lessons on asthma management.
- Health information for smoke impacted areas: <https://www.airnow.gov/air-quality-and-health/fires-and-your-health/>.

In addition to those in a sensitive group, sports coaches, elder care workers, nurses and others who are responsible for the welfare of people impacted by poor air quality are urged to use one of the listed tools to follow the Air Quality Forecast:

- **Air Quality Forecast page:** <http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/> which has links to:
 - **EnviroFlash**, EPA's email and text alert system, <http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/enviroflash.html>
 - **Twitter**, for sign up information go to: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/twitter.html>
 - **EPA's mobile app** is available at: <https://www.airnow.gov/airnow-mobile-app/>
- DEP's **toll-free air quality hotline** is 1-800-223-1196

In addition, you may check EPA's AirNow Fire & Smoke map for particle pollution levels: <https://fire.airnow.gov/>.

For more information call the contacts listed above or go to DEP's air quality web site: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/>.