
2525 Dominic Drive, Suite J
Chico, CA 95928
(530) 891-2882
(530) 891-2878 Fax



W. James Wagoner
Air Pollution Control Officer

Robert McLaughlin
Asst. Air Pollution Control Officer

PRESS RELEASE

July 1, 2008
AIR QUALITY UPDATE

The Butte County Air Quality Management District is issuing this Air Quality Update to notify the public of poor air quality that continues in certain areas of Butte County due to smoke from the numerous wildfires. The smoke has been moved about by winds, but has yet to be cleared out completely. Due to wind shifts air quality can change rapidly at different times during the day; therefore, it is important to monitor the smoke throughout the day and make outdoor plans accordingly. The visibility chart below may be used to estimate the air quality.

Although visible haze in Butte County continues as a result of wildfires, the outdoor activity-reduction recommendations issued are only in effect for areas in the County that continue to experience high levels of unhealthy air. This includes the foothills due to the high volume of fires still burning in that area.

Below is a summary of the air monitoring data collected. The federal health-based 24-hour average Ambient Air Quality Standard is **35** micro grams per cubic meter (ug/m³) for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). Any value above 35 ug/m³ is considered unhealthy.

Chico: The 24-hour average yesterday was **57** ug/m³ which is equal to an Air Quality Index (AQI) of **133**. Today the AQI in Chico is forecast to reach **60**. At this level the air quality is rated **MODERATE**. Air quality in the valley areas can change hour to hour based on the winds. Typically the morning hours in the valley areas have the highest PM_{2.5} levels. These past few days there has also been a spike in PM_{2.5} levels in the afternoon due to winds.

Paradise: The 24-hour average in Paradise yesterday was **288** ug/m³ which is equal to an AQI of **330**. Today the AQI in Paradise is forecast to remain **300**. At this level the air quality is rated **VERY UNHEALTHY for all people**. Air quality in the foothill areas have a typical upslope and down slope of winds and therefore smoke during the wildfires. The past few days the foothills have seen the highest PM_{2.5} levels late in the evening through the morning hours. The best air quality hours have been in the afternoon until the late evening when the smoke returns to down slope.

Gridley: The air quality in Gridley the past few days has been fairly good. The monitoring data for Gridley has not always been available. The 24-hour average in Gridley yesterday was **12** ug/m³ which is equal to an AQI of **38**. Today the AQI in Gridley is forecast to remain at **38**. At this level the air quality is rated **GOOD**. The highest levels of PM_{2.5} are usually in the early mornings with peaks in the afternoons dependent on winds.

Durham: A temporary PM_{2.5} monitor has been set up in Durham. The 24-hour average in Durham yesterday was **27** ug/m³ which is equal to an AQI of **79**. Today the AQI in Durham is forecast to reach **15**. At this level the air quality is rated **GOOD**. As a valley area the highest levels of PM_{2.5} are usually in the early mornings with peaks in the afternoons dependent on winds.

Oroville: There is not a PM_{2.5} monitor available in Oroville to monitor air quality. Officials recommend people use the Visibility Chart to determine smoke levels and air quality for that area.

Unhealthful air quality conditions are expected to continue in localized areas until the fires are extinguished. Information will be updated and posted to the District Web site as available at www.bcaqmd.org and recorded on the Residential Burn HOTLINE at **896-2537** or toll free at **866-240-0859**. The District office number is **891-2882** or **888-891-2882**. For questions regarding health concerns relative to the smoke from the wildfires, please contact your personal health care provider or Butte County Public Health Department at **538-7581** or visit their Web site at www.buttecounty.net/publichealth. The Butte County Public Health Department will issue a separate public health advisory. An Air Quality Index for Particle Pollution and Visibility Chart follow.

Air Quality Index (AQI): Particle Pollution and Visibility Chart

Index Values	Levels of Health Concern	Cautionary Statements	Visibility Range in Miles
0-50	Good	None	10+ miles
51-100*	Moderate	Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.	5 – 10 miles
101-150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.	3 – 5 miles
151-200	Unhealthy	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.	1.5 – 2.5 miles
201-300	Very Unhealthy	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.	1 – 1.25 miles
301-500	Hazardous	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Everyone else should avoid all physical activity outdoors.	< 0.75 miles

###