

Special air quality statement for Huron Perth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, June 8, 2023

Huron Perth, ON – Earlier this week, Environment Canada and the Province of Ontario issued a Special Air Quality Statement for many regions in Ontario, including Huron Perth. Smoke plumes from forest fires in Quebec and northeastern Ontario have resulted in deteriorated air quality. Poor air quality may persist into the weekend.

Air quality and visibility due to wildfire smoke can change over short distances and can vary greatly from hour to hour. Current and forecasted air quality health index (AQHI) values, and related information on health risks can be found at www.airhealth.ca and www.airqualityontario.com. While there are no air quality monitoring stations in Huron or Perth, residents can check the results for Grand Bend, Kitchener-Waterloo, and London to see general air quality trends for our region.

By visiting www.airhealth.ca or www.airqualityontario.com, residents can also find information on recommended actions they can take to reduce their exposure to air pollution and protect their health.

“Individuals and groups can refer to the AQHI and make decisions on how to best protect themselves when air quality is poor,” says Dr. Miriam Klassen, Medical Officer of Health for Huron Perth.

Wildfire smoke can be harmful to everyone’s health, even at low concentrations. Those at greatest risk of experiencing health effects are people with lung disease (such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) or heart disease, older adults, children, pregnant people, and people who work outdoors.

Some ways that people can lower the risk of respiratory problems from poor air quality include:

- Monitoring for symptoms such as coughing, throat irritation, shortness of breath, dizziness or chest pain
- Staying indoors when the AQHI is 7 or greater (high risk) and reducing or stopping strenuous outdoor activities
- Checking on people in your care and those around you who may be more susceptible to air pollution
- Taking a break from the smoke at a location in your community where you can find clean, cool air, such as the library or community centre
- Drinking plenty of water
- Reducing infiltration of outdoor air pollutants into your home. Health Canada suggests:
 - Keeping windows and doors closed, and using air conditioning, or fans.
 - Properly sealing windows and doors with weather stripping.
 - Setting your ventilation system to recirculate when the outdoor air is poor and bring in fresh air when the outdoor air has improved.
 - Installing a high-quality high-efficiency particulate air filter.

Find the latest air quality statements from Environment Canada at weather.gc.ca. Huron Perth Public Health continues to monitor the situation and will provide new information as it becomes available.

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Media Contact: commsresponse@hpph.ca