

- **Local**

North Bay fires impacting air quality region-wide

October 9, 2017



Our reporter Mike Kinney snapped this photo of ash coating a parked car. The ash came from several large fires in the North Bay that impacted air quality on Monday, Oct. 9.

Significant fires in Sonoma, Napa and Yuba counties have impacted air quality throughout the Bay Area, including in West Contra Costa County where residents posted photos to social media of smoke-hazed city streets and ash coating parked cars.

The "Bay Area will be very smoky and have poor air quality today due to large fires in Napa and Sonoma counties," County Supervisor John Gioia said. "Those with asthma and breathing problems should stay indoors."

Gov. Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency the the affected counties, including two fires in Napa County that have burned about 43,000 acres as of 9 a.m. today. Fires also burned in north Santa Rosa and in the Rohnert Park area. More than 30 school districts in Sonoma County, along with Santa Rosa Junior College, were closed, and about 20 shelters have opened due to mandatory evacuations.

These fires are having a significant impact region-wide. The smoke could be clearly smelled at San Francisco International Airport at about midnight. Richmond residents could clearly see the impacts.

"It's bad here," said Catherine Montalbo, who lives in Richmond. "Everything coated with ash. Hard to breathe. Even with our windows shut."

The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) warned of various health risks from the wildfire smoke:

"Smoke can irritate the eyes and airways, causing coughing, a scratchy throat and irritated sinuses. Elevated particulate matter in the air can trigger wheezing in those who suffer from asthma, emphysema or COPD. Elderly persons, children and individuals with respiratory illnesses are particularly susceptible to elevated air pollution levels and should take extra precautions to avoid exposure."

Bay Area residents impacted by wildfire smoke are advised to:

- Limit outdoor activities to avoid unnecessary exposure if you smell smoke
- Set air conditioning units and car vent systems to re-circulate to prevent outside air from moving inside
- Reduce exposure to smoky air by remaining indoors with windows and doors closed, if possible
- If you cannot keep windows and doors closed due to high temperatures, seek out cooling centers in your area
- Stay tuned to local media for changes in smoke or weather condition

Reporter Mike Kinney contributed to this story