

# Air Pollution and School Activities / Outdoor Sport Events

Health recommendations for schools, coaches, and event coordinators in Spokane County

Air Quality Conditions					
Check current conditions at <a href="http://www.SpokaneCleanAir.org">www.SpokaneCleanAir.org</a> , then refer to this chart					
	Good	Moderate	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Unhealthy	Very Unhealthy and Hazardous
<b>Recess</b> (15 minutes)	No restrictions.	Allow students with asthma, respiratory infection, lung or heart disease to stay indoors.	Keep students with asthma, respiratory infection, and lung or heart disease indoors.	Keep all students indoors and keep activity levels light.	Keep all students indoors and keep activity levels light.
<b>P.E.</b> (1 hour)	No restrictions.	Monitor students with asthma, respiratory infection, lung or heart disease. Increase rest periods or substitutions for these students as needed.	Limit to light outdoor activities. Allow any student to stay indoors if going outside might affect their health.  Keep students with respiratory conditions, such as asthma, or breathing trouble, or heart disease or diabetes indoors. Limit these students to moderate activities.	Conduct P.E. indoors. Limit students to light indoor activities.	Keep all students indoors and keep activity levels light.
<b>Athletic Events and Practices</b> (Vigorous activity 2-3 hours)	No restrictions.	Monitor students with respiratory conditions, such as asthma, or breathing trouble, or heart disease. Increase rest periods and substitutions for students as needed.	Consider moving event indoors. If event is not cancelled, increase rest periods and substitutions to allow for lower breathing rates.  Students with asthma, respiratory infection, lung and heart disease, or conditions like diabetes shouldn't play outdoors.	Cancel the event. Or move the event to an area with "Good" air quality — if this can be done without much time spent in transit through areas with poor air quality.	Cancel the event. Or move the event to an area with "Good" air quality — if this can be done without much time spent in transit through areas with poor air quality.

**\*\*NOTE: Asthma Action plans should be followed regardless of air quality for all levels of activity.**

**When air quality is diminished, individuals should pay special attention to their Asthma Action plan.**

**Light Activities:** Playing board games, throwing and catching while standing, and cup stacking.

**Moderate Activities:** Yoga, shooting basketballs, dance instruction, and ping pong.

**Vigorous Activities:** Running, jogging, basketball, football, soccer, swimming, cheerleading, and jumping rope.



## **School Closures and Outdoor Event Cancellations**

School closures are the decision of the individual school district, usually in consultation with the local health department. Outdoor event cancellations are the decision of the event coordinators, usually in consultation with local health department. Consult your local health department if you have questions about air pollution and health, [www.srhd.org](http://www.srhd.org)

## **Fine Particles, Indoor Air Quality, and Health**

Air pollution from wildfires, outdoor burning, wood heating, and traffic can increase fine particles in the air you breathe. Weather patterns such as high pressure systems or air stagnations can keep air pollutants from dispersing, resulting in unhealthy air quality.

Fine particles travel easily indoors, especially if ventilation systems are drawing outside air. Fine particles come in around doors, windows, and small openings. Over time, concentrations of fine particles indoors can approach concentrations outdoors.

Exercising students breathe deeper and more often and take in more air, and more air pollution, into their lungs. Breathing polluted air can cause health problems, including aggravating asthma and other respiratory diseases. Anyone experiencing symptoms such as wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain, headache, and dizziness should be seen by a medical provider.

Schools should reduce student activities when air quality has reached the “Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups” category. Individual students with allergies, asthma, respiratory or heart conditions may need to stay indoors when air quality is in the “Moderate” category.

School buildings with enhanced filtration systems will have improved indoor air quality. Supplemental use of properly sized HEPA-Charcoal air filters that do not produce ozone has been shown to improve indoor air quality by reducing fine particles and chemicals in smoke.

The Washington State Department of Health’s document, *Improving Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality during Wildfire Smoke Events*, provides information about air pollutants, identifies ways to improve your building's indoor air quality, and includes helpful links for information about portable air cleaners. This and other documents are available online: [www.doh.wa.gov/SmokeFromFires](http://www.doh.wa.gov/SmokeFromFires) and [www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/OutdoorAir](http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/OutdoorAir)

## **Current Air Quality Conditions**

In Spokane County, current air quality conditions are available at [www.SpokaneCleanAir.org](http://www.SpokaneCleanAir.org) or call (509) 477-4727.

*Adapted from WA State Department of Health guidance, Rev. Jul 2018*