Spring Thaw: Protection from Wildfire Smoke

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Cal-OSHA Regulations

- Passed as an emergency action July, 2019
- Designed to address emerging and repeated wildfire risk to employees
Key Terms

AQI – Air Quality Index
PM2.5 – Particulate Matter of less than 2.5 micrometers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Air Quality Index (AQI)</th>
<th>Levels of Health Concern</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Categories for PM2.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0 to 50</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 100</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 to 150</td>
<td>Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151 to 200</td>
<td>Unhealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 to 300</td>
<td>Very Unhealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301 to 500</td>
<td>Hazardous</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Standard

- (A) The current AQI for PM2.5 is 151 or greater, and
- (B) The employer should reasonably anticipate that employees may be exposed to wildfire smoke.
The Obligation

- Check AQI forecasts and current AQI for PM2.5 from an approved government source;
- Provide PPE, n95 masks, goggles, etc.
- Implement a system for communicating wildfire smoke hazards including, current AQI, protective measures, encouraging employees to report worsening air quality of adverse symptoms;
- Provide employees with effective training and instruction on health impact of wildfire smoke, the efforts made to protect employees, the right to obtain medical care, how employees can secure information about current AQI, and the employer’s obligation under Cal-OSHA standards; and
- Attempt to engineer solutions to AQI issues (change scheduling, make shift workspaces, work from vehicles).
Exemptions

• Enclosed buildings with mechanical air filtration
• Enclosed vehicles with cabin air filtration
• Firefighters engaged in wildland firefighting
Questions

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