

Outdoor sports and bushfire smoke - February 2019

The following advice is for organisers of outdoor sporting or similar events during the ongoing bushfires in Tasmania. It is about smoke and exercise.

Background

Bushfires in Tasmania will continue to cause smoky conditions across the State. Smoke can come and go rapidly. Smoke depends on the closeness and activity of bushfires, wind direction and other factors.

Health effects

Bushfire smoke can worsen chronic medical conditions, resulting in serious health effects including breathing difficulties and heart attacks.

Some people are at higher risk of harm from smoke than others. These include:

1. People with chronic illnesses, particularly asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, diabetes, angina or a previous heart attack
2. Older people (>65 years)
3. The young (<5 years)
4. Pregnant women

Harmful health effects from smoke may also rarely occur in people without any known risk factors.

If you exercise you breathe in much more smoke, up to 10 to 20 times more when running.

Participants in higher risk groups must review their participation in the context of their own health and the air quality on the day.

Advice about air quality on the day of the event

You should review local conditions on the day of the event to guide your decisions.

You can access information on real-time air quality information about specific locations from the EPA website:

<https://epa.tas.gov.au/epa/air/monitoring-air-pollution/real-time-air-quality-data-for-tasmania>

You may need to use the nearest location to your event to estimate your local conditions.

Air Quality	Indicators	Recommendations
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Smoke is barely visible or can be barely smelled on the day of the eventAir monitoring (if available) shows a one hour average PM2.5 less than 25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	Provide the following advice to participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Air quality may change and deteriorate during the event
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Smoke on the morning of the event is obviousAir monitoring (if available) shows a one hour average PM2.5 of 25 to 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	Provide the following advice to participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Exposure to bushfire smoke can cause serious health problemsExercise will increase exposure to the air pollutionPeople in higher risk groups should not participateAll participants should consider the possible health risks of participating
Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Smoke on the morning of the event is significantAir monitoring (if available) shows a one hour average PM2.5 greater than 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	Organisers should consider cancelling or rescheduling the event.

More information

The Department of Health *Outdoor Smoke and Your Health* Factsheet provides more information and contains links to information about air quality and personal health. This can be accessed from:

https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/air/bushfire_smoke