

Governing Body:	Southern Oregon University	Date Approved:	04/20/26
Policy Contact:	Environmental Health and Safety	Approved By:	President
Custodial Office:	Environmental Health and Safety		
Related Policy:	FAD.083		

A. Description

The purpose of this policy is to ensure safety of staff, faculty, students and visitors.

B. Definition(s)

N/A

C. Policy Statement

Southern Oregon University is committed to protecting the safety of staff, faculty, students, and visitors. Wildfire can be a significant source of air pollution in the area and can pose a major health risk. With the foliage that is present in our region, wildfires can occur and create an air quality hazard. The smoke from a wildfire compounding with the topographic nature of the area creates a bowl effect with the surrounding hills that prevents effective air movement. Smoke is made up of primarily small particles, gases, and water vapor, with trace amounts of hazardous air pollutants. The most harmful are the small particles, or particulate matter smaller than 2.5 micrometers in diameter. These particles can be inhaled deeply into the lungs, damaging lung tissue, and causing respiratory and/or cardiovascular problems. Symptoms from short-term smoke exposure can range from scratchy throat, cough, irritated sinuses, headaches, runny nose, and stinging eyes. Persons with asthma, emphysema, congestive heart disease, and other existing medical conditions can have more serious reactions. To combat these times of hazardous air quality from wildfire smoke, the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Manager will review the air quality from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality tested from the Ashland Fire Department Station 1 and make the following recommendation for preventive measures.

- a. Air Quality Ratings >301 PM2.5 1-hour Average Concentration micrograms per cubic meter: The university will postpone all non-emergency strenuous activity. The university will review the building filtration and make-up air systems to incorporate changes as needed. The university will encourage the use of N95 filtration masks or equivalent for personnel outdoors.
- b. Air Quality Ratings 201-300 PM2.5 1-hour Average Concentration micrograms per cubic meter: The university will limit activity outside for students and employees to less than 3 hours. No activity is to be performed that involves strenuous activity for a prolonged period. The university will review the building filtration and make-up air systems to incorporate changes as needed. The university will encourage the use of N95 filtration masks or equivalent for personnel outdoors.
- c. Air Quality Ratings 151-200 PM2.5 1-hour Average Concentration micrograms per cubic meter: The university will limit activity outside for students and employees to less than 4 hours. No activity is to be performed that involves strenuous activity for a prolonged period.

- d. Air Quality Ratings 101-151 PM2.5 1-hour Average Concentration micrograms per cubic meter: The university will postpone activities for personnel with respiratory illness, asthma, lung and/or heart disease. Personnel should reduce/cease activity if symptoms arise. Rest periods should be increased as needed for personnel with these conditions. Since smoke may worsen symptoms for people with pre-existing health conditions or those particularly sensitive to air pollution, employees experiencing sensitivities to the air quality in their assigned building/work space should contact Human Resources to discuss and arrange for reasonable accommodations.
- e. Buildings that have visible or other signs of hazardous smoke will be evaluated by the EHS Manager and may require further mitigation.
- f. The university retains the right to deploy personnel equipped with appropriate safety protections to meet urgent operational needs or to ensure safety of staff, faculty, students and visitors.

This policy may be revised at any time without notice. All revisions supersede prior policy and are effective immediately upon approval.

D. Relevant Authority

N/A

E. Other Information

N/A

The Policy Contact, defined above, will write and maintain the procedures related to this policy and these procedures will be made available within the Custodial Office.