



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH FACILITIES / 916.441.6400 / 916. 441-6441 (FAX)

# MemberAlert



## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FIRE ALERT VI

Wednesday, November 21, 2007, 3:00 PM PST

The following alert was sent by the state to the Counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino and Riverside:

In anticipation of increasing Santa Ana winds from Wednesday, November 21 to Saturday, November 24, the Office of Emergency Services has requested all State agencies to be prepared for possible activation of response plans over the holiday weekend. CDPH has staff on-call for the State Operations Center, Joint Emergency Operations Center and Regional Emergency Operations Center (Orange County) in the event of activation.

The projected Santa Ana winds may cause ash to pollute the air and cause air quality issues where ash is heavy from the October fires.

The California Department of Public Health, coordinating with the Air Resource Board, has also developed a document about the *Health Risks Associated with Ash & Windy Conditions*; the content of which is below.

### HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ASH & WINDY CONDITIONS

-- Blowing ash from fire affected areas can be hazardous.

-- Blowing ash can be irritating to the skin, nose, throat and lungs and may cause coughing. Ash can be especially hazardous for young children, the elderly, individuals with heart conditions and individuals with respiratory ailments such as asthma, emphysema and bronchitis. When in fire affected areas during windy conditions, individuals should limit physical activity to avoid breathing ash and wear long sleeved shirts and pants to avoid skin contact. If you get ash on your skin, wash it off as soon as possible to avoid irritation. Use eye protection such as glasses, sun glasses or goggles. Well-fitting dust masks, if worn properly, may provide some airway protection. A NIOSH-approved mask rated N-95 or P-100 that forms a close seal on the face will be more effective in blocking particles than simple surgical or dust masks. These are available in many hardware stores. Look for masks with two straps, and position one at the back of the neck and the other at the crown of the head. If you cannot get a close face seal, try a different model or size.

-- Residents with health conditions who live near the fire affected areas should be prepared to stay indoors, limit their activity and use the "recirculation" function on the air conditioner instead of drawing air with ash from outdoors. The use of masks is not recommended for people with lung diseases such as asthma or emphysema, elderly people, and others who may have trouble breathing with masks.

-- Seek medical attention for symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness or shortness of breath. If possible, check on friends and neighbors who may need assistance.

For more information visit [www.BePreparedCalifornia.ca.gov](http://www.BePreparedCalifornia.ca.gov)

*If your facility is suffering a severe impact or needs to evacuate, please notify your local Licensing and Certification Office AND either call 911 (small event) or your county Emergency Operations Center (wide-spread event). The numbers for the county Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) were provided in previous e-alerts, posted online at [www.cahf.org/public/dpp](http://www.cahf.org/public/dpp). We expect these numbers will be the same if the EOCs are activated again.*

*If the situation worsens over the holiday weekend, and you need help from CAHF, please contact Jocelyn Montgomery at [jmontgomery@cahf.org](mailto:jmontgomery@cahf.org). We will be sharing your reports and questions with the state emergency authorities.*

You may also follow the advice and information in previous e-alerts on evacuation, notification, and accessing resources and supplies. All e-alerts can be found at [www.cahf.org/public/dpp](http://www.cahf.org/public/dpp)-- you do not need to be a member of CAHF to access this section of the website.