

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release - Attention Editor

AIR QUALITY ADVISORY IN EFFECT FOR WILLIAMS LAKE

(January 25, 2017 10:00 PST - Kamloops) The Ministry of Environment in collaboration with Interior Health has issued an Air Quality Advisory for Williams Lake due to high concentrations of fine particulate matter that are expected to persist until weather conditions change.

Persons with chronic underlying medical conditions should postpone strenuous exercise until the advisory is lifted. If you are experiencing symptoms such as continuing eye or throat irritation, chest discomfort, shortness of breath, cough or wheezing, follow the advice of your health care provider. Staying indoors helps to reduce fine particulate exposure. Exposure is particularly a concern for infants, the elderly and those who have diabetes, and lung or heart disease.

Real-time air quality observations and information regarding the health effects of air pollution can be found at www.bcairquality.ca.

Tips to reduce your personal health risk

- People with heart or lung conditions may be more sensitive to the effects of poor air quality and should watch for any change in symptoms that may be due to poor air quality exposure. If any symptoms are noted, affected individuals should take steps to reduce their exposure to poor air quality and if necessary see their physician. People with symptoms should go to their health care provider, walk-in clinic or emergency department depending on severity of symptoms.
- Residents with asthma or other chronic illness should activate their asthma or personal care plan.
- Maintaining good overall health is a good way to prevent health effects resulting from short-term exposure to air pollution.
- Use common sense regarding outdoor physical activity; if your breathing becomes difficult or uncomfortable, stop or reduce the activity.
- Avoid roads with heavy vehicle traffic and areas with wood smoke.
- Stay indoors, keep windows and doors closed and reduce indoor sources of pollution such as smoking, vacuuming and use of woodstoves.
- Run an air cleaner. Some room air cleaners, such as HEPA filters, can help reduce smoke indoors provided they are the right size for your home and filters are kept clean.
- Buildings which have large indoor volumes of filtered outside air may provide temporary relief for those with respiratory and cardiac issues.

- For general information about smoke and poor air quality and your health. Contact Health-Link BC available toll free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 8-1-1, or via the web at www.healthlinkbc.ca/kbaltindex.asp.

Voluntary Emission Reduction Actions

- Where wood stoves or fireplaces are the sole source of residential heat, burn well-seasoned wood, and ensure an adequate supply of combustion air. Avoid backyard burning and open debris burning.
- Reduce the use and idling of vehicles.

Additional Information

- Poor dispersion due to calm winds is likely to keep concentrations above thresholds until current weather conditions change.
- For information on particulate matter levels, please check the Ministry's website at www.bcairquality.ca
- The provincial air quality objective for PM_{2.5} is 25 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³), averaged over 24 hours. 24-hour average PM_{2.5} concentrations are summarized below for Williams Lake and other communities at 10:00 AM (PST) today:

Community	concentration (µm ⁻³)
Williams Lake	24.3
Kamloops (downtown)	10.0
Quesnel	23.6

- Note that 24-hour average PM_{2.5} concentrations are currently below the provincial objective in Williams Lake but are forecast to increase and exceed the objective later today. Concentrations are expected to remain elevated until the weather changes.

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