



Ministry of  
Environment

## MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release - Attention Editor

### **WILDFIRE SMOKE ADVISORY IN EFFECT FOR SUNSHINE COAST and SURROUNDING AREAS**

July 9, 2015 – Sea-to-Sky Corridor. The Ministry of Environment in collaboration with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority is continuing the Wildfire Smoke Advisory for the Sea-to-Sky Corridor and surrounding areas because of forest fire smoke that is affecting areas from Howe Sound through Squamish and Whistler to Pemberton and surrounding areas. Smoke concentrations will vary widely as winds, fire behaviour and temperatures change. This situation is expected to persist until meteorological conditions change.

Avoid strenuous outdoor activities. If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, contact your health care provider: difficulty in breathing, chest pain or discomfort, and sudden onset of cough or irritation of airways. Exposure is particularly a concern for infants, the elderly and those who have underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, and lung or heart disease.

For information on current air quality in the Gibsons/Langdale area, Squamish and Whistler see [www.bcairquality.ca](http://www.bcairquality.ca)

#### **Tips to reduce your personal health risk:**

- People with heart or lung conditions may be more sensitive to the effects of smoke and should watch for any change in symptoms that may be due to smoke exposure. If any symptoms are noted, affected individuals should **take steps to reduce their exposure to smoke** 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.
- Use common sense regarding outdoor physical activity – if your breathing becomes difficult or uncomfortable, stop or reduce the activity.
- Stay cool and drink plenty of fluids.
- Smoke levels may be lower indoors. However, elevated levels of smoke particles will still be present. If you stay indoors, be aware of your symptoms.
- Consider visiting a location like a shopping mall with cooler filtered air. Keep in mind that staying indoors may help you stay cool and provide some relief from the smoke, however many air conditioning systems do not filter the air or improve indoor air quality.
- Reduce indoor pollution sources such as smoking or burning other materials.

- You may be able to reduce your exposure to smoke by moving to cleaner air. Conditions can vary dramatically by area and elevation.
- Residents with asthma or other chronic illness should activate their asthma or personal care plan.
- Pay attention to local air quality reports, air quality may be poor even though smoke may not be visible.
- Commercially available HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filters can improve indoor air quality near the device.
- Maintaining good overall health is a good way to prevent health effects resulting from short-term exposure to air pollution.
- For general information about smoke and your health, contact HealthLink BC available toll free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 8-1-1, or via the web at: <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/kbaltindex.asp>.
- Real-time air quality information for the Gibsons/Langdale area, Squamish and Whistler and other communities in B.C. is available at [www.bcairquality.ca](http://www.bcairquality.ca).

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