

City and County of San Francisco
Micki Callahan
Human Resources Director



Department of Human Resources
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 31, 2019
TO: Department Heads
FROM: Micki Callahan, Human Resources Director 
SUBJECT: **New Safety Regulations Governing Employee Exposure to Wildfire Smoke**

Effective 7/29/2019, the California Safety and Health Standards Board implemented emergency regulations that govern an employer's responsibility for protecting employees who may be exposed to wildfire smoke at work. These regulations require employers to take specific steps to protect workers who may be exposed to wildfire smoke containing particulates that are suspended in the air and measure 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM2.5). PM2.5 is the main harmful pollutant for people who are not very close to the fire.

Specifically, employers are required to:

- Identify harmful exposure to airborne particulate matter from wildfire smoke before each shift and periodically thereafter by checking the Air Quality Index (AQI) for particulate matter that exceeds PM2.5 in regions where workers are located. The easiest way to find the current and forecasted AQI for PM2.5 is to go to www.AirNow.gov and enter the zip code of the location where employees will be working.
- Reduce harmful exposure to wildfire smoke if feasible, for example, by relocating work to an enclosed building with filtered air or to an outdoor location where the AQI for PM2.5 is 150 or lower.
- If employers cannot reduce workers' harmful exposure to wildfire smoke so that the AQI for PM2.5 is 150 or lower, they must provide:
 - Respirators such as N95 masks to all employees for voluntary use.
 - Training on the new regulation, the health effects of wildfire smoke, and the safe use and maintenance of respirators.

We are drafting procedures to guide departments during extreme heat and air quality events in collaboration with safety experts from various city agencies. I expect to update you within the next few weeks with more specific details surrounding your HR practices and general safety concerns. In the meantime, you may obtain more information about this new regulation at:

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/OSHSB/documents/Protection-from-Wildfire-Smoke-Emergency-txtbrdconsider.pdf>