

Fires in the Northern Territories July 2014

July 23 2014



Caption: NASA/Goddard, Lynn Jenner with information from North American Fire Incident Display system. Credit: Jeff Schmaltz, MODIS Rapid Response Team.

Environment Canada has issued a high health risk warning for Yellowknife and surrounding area because of heavy smoke in the region due to forest fires. In the image taken by the Aqua satellite, the smoke is drifting eastward along normal wind patterns. Fire is an obvious health

hazard, but the smoke that comes from fires is not quite so obvious and its effects are insidious.

The smoke released by any type of fire (forest, brush, crop, structure, tires, waste or wood burning) is a mixture of particles and chemicals produced by incomplete burning of carbon-containing materials. All smoke contains carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and particulate matter (PM or soot). Smoke can contain many different chemicals, including aldehydes, acid gases, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, [polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons](#) (PAHs), benzene, toluene, styrene, metals and dioxins. The type and amount of particles and chemicals in smoke varies depending on what is burning, how much oxygen is available, and the burn temperature. Exposure to high levels of smoke should be avoided. Individuals are advised to limit their physical exertion if exposure to high levels of smoke cannot be avoided. Individuals with cardiovascular or respiratory conditions (e.g., asthma), fetuses, infants, young children, and the elderly may be more vulnerable to the health effects of [smoke exposure](#).

High values are forecast to persist until this evening (7/23) when a cold front moves across the region and is expected to clear some of the smoke.

There are currently 160 fires burning throughout the Northwest Territories.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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