

# Chile sounds smog alarm ahead of football showcase

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Santiago in Chile, a city of seven million people, is one of the most polluted capitals in Latin America

Authorities in Santiago have ordered a day of extraordinary anti-smog measures on Friday, with a week to go before the Chilean capital hosts the opening match of the South American football championships.

Under the so-called "pre-emergency" declared by the Santiago mayor's office, more than 300,000 vehicles must stay off the roads and nearly

800 factories must remain closed.

The measures aim to combat the [air pollution](#) blanketing the capital and prevent it from clouding the Copa America, which kicks off next Thursday at Santiago's National Stadium with a match between the hosts and Ecuador.

The measure also bans burning wood or biomass fuels, suspends physical education classes at schools and recommends citizens forego outdoors athletic activities for a day.

It was adopted "due to poor wind conditions, with the objective of protecting the health of the population," the mayor's office said in a statement.

Last week the southern city of Temuco, another of the eight tournament host cities, declared an environmental emergency because of air pollution caused by wood-burning heaters.

The government has vowed not to let air pollution interfere with the continental football showcase, which runs through July 4 and is expected to draw some 750,000 fans.

Santiago, a city of seven million people, is one of the most polluted capitals in Latin America.

The last time authorities declared an environmental "pre-emergency" here was in July 2012.

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