

Smoke from Canada wildfires prompts air quality alerts in Colorado, Montana

May 21 2023



Motorists wait for a red light on westbound 18th Avenue at Park Avenue as smoke shrouds the skyline Friday, May 19, 2023, in downtown Denver. Smoke from numerous fires in the Canadian province of Alberta has rolled into Colorado Friday, giving Denver a ranking of third worst air quality of all major cities globally. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Education has issued an air quality health advisory alert as a result of the inflow of smoke across the Centennial State. Credit: AP Photo/David Zalubowski

Smoke from dozens of raging wildfires in western Canada has drifted south into the United States and prompted the states of Colorado and Montana to issue air quality alerts.

Colorado's Department of Public Health and Environment put out [alerts and advisories](#) for Saturday afternoon through Sunday afternoon for much of the eastern half of the state, including Denver. It warned that air quality may be unhealthy during that period.

"People with heart or [lung disease](#), [older adults](#), and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion; everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion," the department said.

Particle pollution led the air quality index along parts of the Front Range to reach 168 on Saturday, the department said. A reading between 151 and 200 indicates unhealthy conditions that can affect sensitive groups as well as some members of the general public.

An air quality [alert](#) was also in effect Saturday in Montana, with the greatest smoke concentrations in central and eastern parts of the state, according to the Department of Environmental Quality.

Utah's Department of Environmental Quality said Friday that it was starting to see the smoke on its monitors in northern and eastern parts of the state. It urged residents to avoid outdoor exertion in areas with visible smoke or haze.



Heavy smokes shrouds the terminal at Denver International Airport Friday, May 19, 2023, in Denver. Smoke from numerous wildfires burning in the Canadian province of Alberta has rolled into Colorado, triggering air quality health advisory alerts across the state and giving Denver the ranking of third worst air quality of any major cities across the globe for the day. Credit: AP Photo/David Zalubowski



Jetliners taxi in heavy smoke at Denver International Airport Friday, May 19, 2023, in Denver. Smoke from numerous wildfires burning in the Canadian province of Alberta has rolled into Colorado, triggering air quality health advisory alerts across the state and giving Denver the ranking of third worst air quality of any major cities across the globe for the day. Credit: AP Photo/David Zalubowski



The skyline is obscured as smoke from wildfires in Alberta rolls south early Friday, May 19, 2023, in Denver. Credit: AP Photo/David Zalubowski

The smoke created widespread haze across Idaho earlier in the week, according to its Department of Environmental Quality.

The fires in Canada have been burning mostly in the province of Alberta, where thousands of residents have evacuated and regional officials have issued state of emergency alerts. There have also been fires in British Columbia.

In Calgary and Edmonton, the two biggest cities in Alberta, the health impact was determined to be of "very high risk" on Saturday by the Canadian government's Air Quality Health Index. Sensitive groups such as children and [older people](#) were advised to avoid outdoor physical

exertion and the general population was urged to limit outdoor activities.

© 2023 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Smoke from Canada wildfires prompts air quality alerts in Colorado, Montana (2023, May 21) retrieved 2 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2023-05-canada-wildfires-prompts-air-quality.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--