

# NYC, bracing for another round of Canadian wildfire smoke this summer, works on response

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New York City is bracing for Canadian wildfire smoke to potentially roll in over the five boroughs again this summer, and Mayor Eric Adams

pledged on May 30 his administration is going to engage in "greater outreach" with residents during future air quality emergencies to make sure they know what precautions to take.

For starters, Adams—who faced heat last summer over what some saw as their sluggish reaction to the city being blanketed in [wildfire](#) smoke blown in from Canada—said in an afternoon press conference in Brooklyn that his team has developed a new internal air quality response protocol.

Adams and several top advisers said they couldn't share details because the protocol is still in draft form, but said it'll "enhance communication and outreach to vulnerable populations" and noted it was drafted in collaboration with officials in San Francisco, who often deal with wildfires.

The mayor also acknowledged that not enough New Yorkers are signed up for Notify NYC, the primary tool the city uses to alert residents about weather emergencies in real time via text messages. He said his administration needs to perform "an analysis" of how to bring up the number of subscribers.

"How do we get people to be more forward-thinking on signing up for a great tool, Notify NYC, but it's not being used as the way we would like to across the city," he said.

Adams and his aides also said they've updated their "air quality emergency guidelines."

Zach Iscol, the mayor's commissioner of Emergency Management, referred to a page on the Department of Health's website that offers tips on what to do during an air quality emergency like "stay indoors with windows and doors closed if temperatures allow" and "limit activities

that can worsen indoor air, like frying or broiling foods, smoking or vaping tobacco or cannabis products, vacuuming, burning candles or incense, or using a fireplace."

The mayor and the other officials at the press conference didn't elaborate on how the new guidance will be disseminated.

Meantime, Iscol confirmed the city is expecting a potential repeat of last June's emergency, when plumes of acrid smoke from massive wildfires raging through Canada enveloped the Big Apple in an orange hue that made it dangerous for some New Yorker to breathe without masks on.

"It is looking like it's going to be an active wildfire season, so it is something we're looking at and preparing for," he said. "It looks like there are a lot of very dry areas of Canada right now that can lead to increased amount of smoke when you have those types of wildfires."

Wildfire season in Canada typically runs through October.

Pressed for more details on how exactly the city will improve outreach to vulnerable New Yorkers, Iscol acknowledged to the Daily News after the press conference that there aren't any specific new emergency digital communication initiatives in the pipeline.

But he mentioned that his agency is operating "Ready New York," an in-person public education campaign that involves Emergency Management staffers fanning out across the city to hand out informational pamphlets on what to do during crisis events.

Iscol also said it's incumbent on individuals outside of the Adams administration to help with emergency response.

"It's not just putting stuff on a website, it's conversations with loved

ones, it's making sure that [elected officials] are messaging to their constituents, it's the ready New York presentations we do, it's [social media](#), it's the press—you guys are a huge part of educating the public," he told The News.

After last year's Canadian wildfire emergency, public school parents and some local Democratic elected officials blasted the mayor for not publicly warning New Yorkers earlier about the dangers of the smoke and waiting nearly a full day after it first started blowing in before announcing outdoor school activities would be cancelled the next day.

At Thursday's press conference, Adams said last year's emergency showed "how quickly dangerous wildfire smoke could blanket our city."

"It was really amazing to see how something so far away can impact our city and impacting the breathing of everyday New Yorkers," he said.

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