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November 15, 2018

Health Officer Statement on Air Quality and Use of N95 Respirators/Masks

In collaboration with the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) a series of Air Quality Advisories have notified the public of poor air quality conditions in Nevada County resulting from the Camp Fire in Butte County. Conditions are expected to vary but may be in the Very Unhealthy to Hazardous ranges at times. A number of questions have been raised about the use of N95 respirator masks during a wildfire smoke event. The Nevada County Public Health Officer is advising only the appropriate use of N95 respirator masks for those who do not have access to filtered or recirculated air and instead urges people to stay indoors and avoid exposure to smoke. While the use of N95 respirators if properly fitted may help some people who cannot otherwise avoid smoke exposure, the N95 respirators can increase the work of breathing and can exacerbate symptoms in those with respiratory or heart problems. N95 respirator mask use by those with heart and respiratory diseases can be dangerous, and should only be done under a doctor's supervision. Also, respirators do not come in sizes suitable for children. Since they would not fit well enough to provide a tight face seal, they would not be effective at reducing exposure.

To sign up for the Air Quality Health Advisory email list, please visit www.myairdistrict.com. For regularly updated information on local air quality, please visit www.sparetheair.com.

For more on the use of Particulate Respirators (Masks) by the general public and how to use it if chosen, please see: [https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Documents/Use%20of%20Particulate%20Respirators%20\(Masks\)%20to%20Protect%20from%20Wildfire%20Smoke%20or%20Ash.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Documents/Use%20of%20Particulate%20Respirators%20(Masks)%20to%20Protect%20from%20Wildfire%20Smoke%20or%20Ash.pdf)

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