



## **SMOKE ADVISORY UPDATED**

**Issued:** 7:00 pm Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2009

### **South Okanagan and Central Okanagan continued, North Okanagan and Shuswap lifted.**

Smoke levels have continued to drop in the North Okanagan this afternoon. Observers in the Shuswap say that the current weather is reducing smoke levels there. This afternoon the smoke from the fire west of Fintry is travelling southwards along the west shore of Okanagan Lake. Kelowna has generally low levels of smoke, but high levels are occurring in West Kelowna and communities to the south: Peachland, Summerland and Penticton.

Air quality monitoring stations are only located in Kamloops, Vernon, Kelowna and Keremeos: currently the Kamloops, Kelowna and Vernon stations are recording low levels of smoke. Values at Keremeos are rising. As wind patterns and conditions at the Terrace Mountain fire change, smoke conditions may change rapidly throughout the Okanagan and Shuswap. The highest and most variable levels will be experienced in the areas closest to the fire.

More information on advisories and air quality can be found the British Columbia Ministry of Environment site at:

<http://www.bcairquality.ca/>

The Interior Health Authority maintains a website with information on health risks associated with forest fires and actions individuals can take to reduce their exposure to smoke:

<http://www.interiorhealth.ca/index.aspx>

The following is a quote from an interior health press release:

*“People with heart or lung conditions may be more sensitive to the effects of smoke and should watch for any change in symptoms that may be due to smoke exposure. If any symptoms are noted, affected individuals should **take steps to reduce their exposure to smoke** and if necessary see their physician. People with symptoms should go to their health care provider, walk in clinic or emergency department depending on severity of symptoms.*

#### ***Reducing Exposure to Smoke***

*There are some actions you can take to reduce the health effects of smoke in the air:*

- *Use common sense regarding outdoor physical activity – if your breathing becomes difficult or uncomfortable, stop or reduce the activity.*
- *Stay cool and drink plenty of fluids.*
- *Smoke levels may be lower indoors, however levels of smoke particles will still be increased. If you stay indoors, be aware of your symptoms.*
- *Consider visiting a location like a shopping mall with cooler filtered air. Keep in mind that staying indoors may help you stay cool and provide some relief from the smoke, however many air conditioning systems do not filter the air or improve indoor air quality.*
- *Keep indoor air cleaner by avoiding smoking or burning other materials.*
- *You may be able to reduce your exposure to smoke by moving to cleaner air. Conditions can vary dramatically by area and elevation.*
- *Residents with asthma or other chronic illness should activate their asthma or personal care plan.*
- *Pay attention to local air quality reports, air quality may be poor even though smoke may not be visible.*
- *Commercially available HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filters can further reduce poor indoor air quality near the device. “*

**The Ministry of Environment will continue to monitor air quality. This Air Quality Advisory is in effect until further notice.**

Contacts:	
Ralph Adams (250 371 6279) Air Quality Meteorologist BC Ministry of Environment Kamloops	Gabi Matscha (250 371 6296) Environmental Quality Section Head BC Ministry of Environment Kamloops

If you have received this advisory from another source, and would like to be added to the distribution list, please contact Ralph Adams.