



# WHERE THERE'S FIRE, THERE'S SMOKE!

NSW HAS BEEN UNDER A BLANKET OF SMOKE; ASH HAS BEEN FALLING IN MANY AREAS, MAKING IT DIFFICULT NOT ONLY TO WORK, BUT TO BREATHE & IT COULD GET WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER.

THIS SMOKE CONTAINS MICROSCOPIC PARTICLES WHICH COULD ENTER THE BLOOD STREAM AND HAVE A RANGE OF HARMFUL EFFECTS IN OUR BODIES.

SYDNEY HAS HAD SOME OF THE WORST AIR QUALITY ON EARTH IN RECENT DAYS. PEOPLE WITH RESPIRATORY AND CARDIOVASCULAR PROBLEMS COULD BE AT SERIOUS RISK. PEOPLE WHO DON'T NORMALLY EXPERIENCE SENSITIVITY ARE FEELING THE SERIOUS EFFECTS OF THE DETERIORATING AIR QUALITY.

---

## Check with your mates:

- Do you or your workmates feel affected by the poor air quality?
- Shortness of breath, generally feeling unwell?
- Continuing to work in the smoke could make it worse.

## What you can do:

- Don't just put a mask on because the boss says so
- Talk to your HSR's & Delo's to see what it means for the work you are doing
- Look out for your mates who might be at risk
- You have the right to cease work that could put you at risk
- Move indoors or to a safe place if you feel affected
- Download the Air Rater App onto your phone for up-to-date monitoring info
- Check the NSW Governments colour coded Air Quality Index (AQI)

## SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE IF YOU FEEL UNWELL

**Stand up.**  
**Speak out.**  
**Come home.**



YOU HAVE THE SUPPORT OF YOUR UNION. THE BACKING OF THE COLLECTIVE ON-THE-JOB IS VITAL TO PROTECTING YOUR RIGHT TO WORK IN A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT, TALK TO YOUR WORKMATES, HSR'S AND DELEGATES.

---

# YOUR SAFETY COMES FIRST

ISSUED 18 DECEMBER 2019.  
REPLACES PREVIOUS VERSION

IF THE AIR QUALITY FEELS BAD, IT PROBABLY IS.

THE MOST DANGEROUS PARTICLES IN BUSH FIRE SMOKE ARE PM2.5. LARGER PM10 PARTICLES ARE ALSO HAZARDOUS. MULTIPLY PM2.5 READINGS FROM AIRRATER X 4 TO GET THE EQUIVALENT NSW AQI (MULTIPLY PM10 X 2) CHECK THE TABLE BELOW. THE AIRRATER APP PROVIDES LIVE READINGS OF PM2.5 & PM10 LEVELS BUT UNFORTUNATELY THE NSW GOVERNMENT ONLY PROVIDES A 24-HOUR ROLLING AVERAGE. WE ARE USING THE NSW GOVERNMENT ADVICE, WITH THE AIRRATER LIVE PM2.5 & PM10 READINGS.

HEAT AND HUMIDITY MAKE THE EFFECT OF AIR POLLUTION WORSE

NSW Health Air Quality Index (AQI)	NSW Health advice: What action should people take?	NSW AQI values	Whichever is higher		MUA's advice to members
			PM2.5 micrograms/m <sup>3</sup> (from AirRater)	PM10 micrograms/m <sup>3</sup> (from AirRater: under 'more information')	
Fair	People unusually sensitive to air pollution: Plan strenuous outdoor activities when air quality is better	67 - 99	16.75 - 24.75	33.5 – 49.5	At this level, measures should be put in place for when the Air Quality worsens. TALK TO YOUR HSR & DELEGATE
National Air Quality Standard for - PM2.5: 25 micrograms/m <sup>3</sup> - PM10: 50 micrograms/m <sup>3</sup>					
Poor	AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT				
	Sensitive groups: Avoid strenuous outdoor activity	100 - 149	25 - 37.25	50 – 74.5	Risk to workers performing strenuous work should be assessed at this level. Workers should talk to their HSR and Delegates about what system is in place to keep you safe
Very Poor	AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT				
	Sensitive groups: Avoid strenuous outdoor activity Everyone: cut back or reschedule strenuous outdoor activities	150 - 200	37.5 - 50	75 - 100	Strenuous work such as Lashing should <u>cease</u> and workers should move indoors
Hazardous	AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT				
	Sensitive groups: Avoid all outdoor activity Everyone: cut back or reschedule strenuous outdoor activities	200+	50+	100+	Strenuous work such as Lashing should <u>cease</u> and workers should move indoors

COOPER

**Stand up.  
Speak out.  
Come home.**



### Sensitive groups include:

- People with asthma or lung problems of any kind
- People with other chronic illnesses like heart disease, diabetes or a previous stroke
- People who are pregnant
- Older people, especially those over 65 years
- Children under 14, and especially children under five and babies

