

**WAC 296-820-820 Hazard communication.** For any worksite covered by WAC 296-820-805 through 296-820-860, the employer must establish and implement a system for communicating wildfire smoke hazards in a form readily understandable by all affected employees, including provisions designed to encourage employees to inform the employer of wildfire smoke hazards at the worksite without fear of reprisal.

(1) The hazard communication system must include procedures for:

(a) Informing employees when the current PM<sub>2.5</sub> as identified in WAC 296-820-815, exceeds the following thresholds, and the protective measures available to employees to reduce their wildfire smoke exposures:

(i) When at least two consecutive current PM<sub>2.5</sub> readings are 20.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (AQI 69) or more;

(ii) 35.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (AQI 101) or more;

(iii) 250.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (AQI 301) or more;

(iv) 500.4 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (AQI 500) or more; and

(v) 555 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (beyond the AQI) or more.

(b) Enabling and encouraging employees to inform the employer of:

(i) Worsening air quality;

(ii) Availability issues of appropriate exposure control measures and respiratory protection required by WAC 296-820-805 through 296-820-860; and

(iii) Any symptoms that may potentially be related to wildfire smoke exposure including, but not limited to:

(A) Respiratory:

- Cough;
- Difficulty breathing;
- Wheezing;
- Shortness of breath, particularly when accompanied by greater use of accessory muscles;
- Asthma attack;
- Runny nose;
- Sore throat;
- Sinus pain or pressure; or
- Phlegm.

(B) Cardiovascular:

- Chest pain or discomfort;
- Fast or irregular heartbeat;
- Feeling weak, light-headed, faint, or dizzy; or
- Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back.

(C) Symptoms concerning for a stroke:

- Sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body;
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or difficulty understanding speech;
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes;
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance, or lack of coordination; or
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

(D) Headache; scratchy or irritated eyes; fatigue or tiredness.

(2) A wildfire smoke response plan must be included in the written accident prevention program before work that exposes the worker to a current PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration of 20.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (AQI 69) or more. The wildfire smoke response plan must be tailored to the workplace and include at least the following elements:

- (a) The health effects and symptoms of wildfire smoke exposure;
- (b) The importance of informing the employer when the employee is experiencing symptoms of wildfire smoke exposure;
- (c) The right to obtain medical attention without fear of reprisal;
- (d) The requirements of WAC 296-820-805 through 296-820-860;
- (e) The employer's methods of determining the current PM<sub>2.5</sub> under WAC 296-820-815;
- (f) How employees can obtain the current PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and the employer's methods to communicate the current PM<sub>2.5</sub>;
- (g) The employer's response plan for wildfire smoke, including methods to protect employees from wildfire smoke, and the exposure symptom response procedures;
- (h) The importance, benefits, and limitations of using a properly fitted respirator when exposed to wildfire smoke;
- (i) The risks and limitations of using an unfitted respirator, and the risks of wearing a respirator without a medical evaluation; and
- (j) How to properly put on, use, and maintain the respirators provided by the employer.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, 49.17.040, 49.17.050, 49.17.060, and chapter 49.17 RCW. WSR 24-01-070, § 296-820-820, filed 12/14/23, effective 1/15/24.]