

AIR POLLUTION

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Heavy smoke and carbon monoxide are often present on the typical wildfire. Some exposure is unavoidable; however, employee exposure shall be limited when possible. To do this, managers shall make an effort to:

- Locate incident bases in smoke-free areas.
- Provide rest breaks out of the smoke when possible.
- Rotate crews between smoky and less smoky work.
- Keep shifts short in heavy smoke.

When smoke levels remain bad for many days, managers shall:

- Relieve those thought to be at high risk. This includes employees with heart conditions, respiratory ailments, and allergies.
- Caution supervisors to be alert for problems associated with smoke and carbon monoxide (e.g., chest pain, asthma, or allergy symptoms).
- Alert safety officers to continually monitor smoke levels and advise incident command.

Excess exposure to carbon monoxide causes headaches, fatigue, drowsiness, and for some, impaired motor performance, decision making ability, and cognitive function. The best defense against carbon monoxide is to limit fire fighter exposure.

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