



State of Utah

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Environmental Quality

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## NEWS RELEASE

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# Fireworks and Wildfires Impact Air and Health

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Departments of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Health (UDOH) would like to help Utah residents celebrate Independence Day safely by reminding everyone of the potential for high concentrations of smoke associated with fireworks displays.

Fireworks, along with the high wildfire danger, can take a toll on health during the summer when ozone pollution is also a factor.

“It’s a concern for everyone,” said Bryce Bird, director of Division of Air Quality. “Ozone is formed when urban emissions are converted by sunlight and heat with levels peaking in the afternoon hours. In addition, smoke from fireworks and wildfires in Utah, and outside of Utah, makes air pollution worse.”

Impacts from fireworks and wildfires come primarily from fine particulate matter. Exposure to particulate matter may cause eye, nose and throat irritation leading to coughing and sinus irritation. Headaches, burning eyes or runny nose are also common. Smoke can make symptoms worse for those with heart or lung disease and they may also experience chest pain, palpitations, shortness of breath, or fatigue. When smoke levels are high enough, even healthy people may experience some of these symptoms.

Those most affected are the young, the elderly, and those sensitive individuals with respiratory conditions.

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DEQ provides hourly air pollution updates and a three-day pollution forecast on its website at [www.airquality.utah.gov](http://www.airquality.utah.gov).

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