



# SMOKEWISE ASHLAND



**FIRE ADAPTED  
COMMUNITIES**  
LEARNING NETWORK

## **Business Resiliency Workbook for Smoke Preparedness**

### **Partners:**

Ashland Chamber of Commerce  
Travel Ashland  
Ashland Fire & Rescue  
Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network  
United States Forest Service  
Asante Ashland Community Hospital

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# 3 Steps to Smoke Preparedness

## How to be prepared for smoke impacts to your business, employees and customers

1. Assess your current situation
  2. Take action to help minimize smoke impacts
  3. Be ready with a communication plan during a smoke event
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### 1. Assess your current situation

#### • Your employees

- ✓ Identify [smoke vulnerable employees](#) and any effects to work availability EMPLOYEES AT RISK

#### EMPLOYEES WHO WORK OUTDOORS

- ✓ [OSHA Regulated Heat and Smoke Rules - Summary](#)
- ✓ Estimate mask availability, needs and requirements
  - ✓ (Recommended: N95 or N100 respirators)
- ✓ Follow and understand [OSHA Regulations](#) for Smoke and Heat
  - ✓ OSHA Slideshow Training: [OSHA Wildfire Smoke Training - Module 1](#)
  - ✓ OSHA Video: [How to Put on and Use a Respirator](#)

#### • Your customers

- ✓ Determine how smoke could impact how your customers access your business. Identify strategies to adapt your services and facility to provide clean air for your customers. *(Examples include utilizing air purifiers in customer areas, or moving outdoor dining tables inside)*

#### • Your building(s) - (commercial, office, retail, home, mobile, outdoor, or combination-of)

- ✓ Identify challenges to creating/maintaining good [indoor air quality](#)  
*Sources of Indoor Air Pollution (examples: frying or broiling meats, vacuuming, manufacturing processes that produce airborne particles, etc.)*
- ✓ Determine how you can improve the building envelope seal, which includes doors, windows, and walls.
  - ✓ Evaluate door and window use *(Operational needs versus habits that can be adjusted during times of smoke)*
- ✓ Determine how your current air filtration system works (if any) and what type of filters you are currently using or can upgrade to (Recommended filters: HEPA, or rated MERV 13 or higher, but it depends on your system):

HVAC: \_\_\_\_\_

Filters: \_\_\_\_\_

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### 2. Take action to help minimize smoke impacts

#### • Your employees

- ✓ Who are the key individuals authorized to make decisions if the owner/Manager is unavailable?
- ✓ Create/update a list of personal contact information for all staff (employee directory) to utilize for communications/notifications regarding preparedness actions and contingency plans for business operations in case of smoke (or other events or emergencies) Click here for a fillable [Employee Emergency Contact Directory](#)

- ✓ Create a plan for how to conduct business if impacted by a smoke event – for example: Who can work remotely? How will they be notified?

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Who cannot come to work because of personal health impacts? How will that affect business operations and scheduling? Are there alternative workspaces or temporarily reassigned duties these individuals could utilize to continue working safely?

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What community resources are available for my customers and employees?

- ✓ Make sure each employee has access to a respirator/mask and knows how to use it. Recommended: N95 or N100 respirators

WHO PURCHASES: \_\_\_\_\_ COST: \_\_\_\_\_

- ✓ Research how the various **smoke levels** impact individual employee health concerns and activities (i.e. what individual actions should be taken at each level?)

**MEDICAL ADVICE RESOURCES:** Personal Physicians, Asante Ashland Community Hospital, Jackson County Health & Human Services, Valley Immediate Care, Rogue Community Health, Jackson Care Connect, etc.

- ✓ Understand Oregon OSHA regulations for **smoke and heat**
- ✓ Provide **employee training** if required by Oregon OSHA
- ✓ Devise a communication plan for your employees – how will you communicate with them?

Text    Phone    Email    Meetings

#### • **Your customers**

- ✓ Create a plan for how you will conduct business in a smoke event. Example: Will employees and customers be outside or, come inside?
- ✓ Create a plan for how you will communicate with your customers during a smoke event at each AQI risk level (messaging for **moderate** smoke levels versus very **unhealthy/hazardous** levels)

What methods of communication will you use? Which methods are appropriate to your type of business operation? *For example: website, recorded phone message, signage, email, face-to-face interactions (script), etc.*

#### • **Your building**

- ✓ Install new HVAC filters before fire season. Recommend HEPA or MERV 13 or higher.
- ✓ Stock up on enough filters for the season, as they are typically in short supply during smoke events.
- ✓ Inspect filters periodically to see if they need to be changed. It is recommended checking filters at least every 4-weeks during periods when your furnace or air conditioner is being regularly used. Clean filters will help your HVAC system run more efficiently.

***It may be necessary to change the filter in as little as every 2-weeks during poor air quality conditions. Change filters as needed.***

- ✓ Consider adding air purification to your HVAC system. Contact a local HVAC specialist for a business/home consultation.
- ✓ Inspect the building envelope (this includes doors, windows, and walls, vents) for places where smoky air could infiltrate the indoor space. Consider changing how many doors are utilized or requesting patrons or employees use doors that would result in the least amount of air infiltration (i.e., reduces how much smoky air gets into the building).

***Double-doored vestibules, auto-closing doors, or doors with air-curtains, are recommended.***

- ✓ Consider utilizing stand-alone air purifiers or air scrubbers as part of your **indoor air quality** maintenance if it is appropriate.

Purchasing a stand-alone HEPA air purifier(s): Choose the most appropriate air purifier for the size of your space.

**Residential Air Purifier units** can be purchased at **local stores** or online.

- ✓ Plan how to seal off a room(s) in case of the need to remain indoors. Install new weatherstripping on your windows and doors where air tends to leak.
- ✓ Periodically check the air quality inside your building(s).
- ✓ Obtain building plans for your building(s) to assist with inspections and action plans.

## • **Investment**

***If you have a small amount to invest:***

- ✓ Install MERV 13/HEPA filters in your HVAC System
- ✓ Purchase a stand-alone air purifier(s) that is appropriate for your building
- ✓ Install new weather stripping and check windows, doors and walls for leaks.

***If you have more money to invest, including everything in the above list:***

- ✓ Install an air purification component to your HVAC System.
- ✓ Look into installing Air Curtains on doors that are continually used or stay open for long periods of time during smoke events (Costs depend on the size of the units).

### **Additional Considerations:**

- Depending on your business, the use of ovens, stoves, vacuums, manufacturing processes that produce airborne particles, etc. can make the indoor air quality worse. Ensure that employees working under poor air quality conditions have respirators, masks, and/or stand-alone air purifiers available (*see OSHA rules*).
- Window AC Units should be used with caution during smoke events. Seal the sides of the unit so smoke does not seep into your building.
- If your building does not have AC, consider running an HVAC system on "FAN" while using new MERV13 or better filters.
- During summer wildfire season, monitor [air quality index](#) changes and respond accordingly. When the Air Quality Index (AQI) hits 101, [Oregon's Rules to Address Employee Exposure to Wildfire Smoke](#) take effect. There are several ways you can check the AQI:

Go to [Oregon DEQ](#) site or OregonAIR app. If these options are not practical for you, use the [5-3-1 Visibility Chart](#) to estimate your AQI

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## **3. Be ready with a communication plan during a smoke event**

### • **Implement your smoke communication plan**

- ✓ Monitor the Air Quality Index and respond accordingly during a smoke event
- ✓ Communicate with employees (utilize prep from Step 2)
- ✓ Communicate with customers or vendors, as needed (utilize prep from Step 2)
- ✓ Communicate with important contacts for your business. Have contact lists available for authorized employees to utilize as needed.
- ✓ **Measure** indoor air quality with a portable smoke measurement device.

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*The Ashland Chamber, in collaboration with Ashland Fire & Rescue, has created this workbook to help guide you in mitigating the challenges of smoke. The products recommended in this guide are examples of items that have gone through significant research. However, you need to make your own decisions based on your building capacity and budget. For the most up-to-date information & recommendations please visit:*

[ashlandchamber.com/prepare](http://ashlandchamber.com/prepare) • [smokewiseashland.org](http://smokewiseashland.org)  
[ashland.or.us/evacuate](http://ashland.or.us/evacuate)