



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness



**northern health**  
*the northern way of caring*

## Air quality warning and open burning restrictions in effect for Houston

**November 5, 2025**

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The Ministry of Environment and Parks in collaboration with the Northern Health Authority has issued an Air Quality Warning for Houston due to elevated fine particulate matter.

Exposure to fine particulate matter is particularly a concern for infants, older adults, individuals with chronic conditions (such as asthma, COPD, heart disease, and diabetes) or respiratory infections, and those who are pregnant. Persons with chronic underlying medical conditions or acute infections should postpone or reduce strenuous exercise until the warning is ended. Anyone experiencing symptoms such as continuing eye or throat irritation, chest discomfort, shortness of breath, cough or wheezing, should follow the advice of their health care provider. Staying indoors helps to reduce exposure.

Open burning restrictions are now in effect within 50 km from the Houston firehall. No new fires may be initiated, and no additional material may be added to existing fires. For more information on burning restrictions, refer to the Mandatory Emission Reduction Actions section below.

Current conditions are expected to persist until weather conditions change and/or local emissions are reduced.

The next update will be on November 06, 2025 and posted to the province's [Air Quality Warnings webpage](#).

Visit the provincial [air quality data webpage](#) for real-time observations.

## **Actions you can take**

As air contaminant levels increase, health risks increase. Consider reducing or rescheduling outdoor sports, activities and events.

People more likely to be negatively impacted by outdoor air pollution should reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors or seek medical attention if experiencing symptoms. This includes people aged 65 and older, pregnant individuals, infants and young children, people with an existing illness or chronic health condition such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease and diabetes, and people who work outdoors.

### **Follow your common sense**

- Stop or reduce your activity level if breathing becomes uncomfortable or you feel unwell.
- Always carry any rescue medications with you.
- Make sure that children and others who cannot care for themselves follow the same advice.

### **Monitor your symptoms**

- Different people have different responses to elevated levels of air contaminants.
- Mild irritation and discomfort such as eye, nose and throat irritation, headaches or a mild cough are common, and usually disappear when the air contaminants return to typical levels.
- More serious but less common symptoms include wheezing, chest pains or severe cough.
- People with asthma or other chronic illness should follow any personal care plans designed with their family physicians.
- If you are unsure whether you need medical care, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.
- If you are experiencing difficulty in breathing, chest pain or discomfort, or a severe cough, contact your physician, walk-in clinic, or emergency department. If you are having a medical emergency, call 9-1-1.

## Tips to reduce your exposure to air pollution

- Air contaminant levels may be lower indoors but will still be elevated, so stay aware of your symptoms even when you are indoors.
- When indoors, keep windows and doors closed as much as possible.
- Protect your indoor air from outdoor air pollution. Actions can include using a clean, good quality air filter in your ventilation system and/or a certified portable air cleaner that can filter fine particles. Do-it-yourself air cleaners may also be used if other options are not available. For details, visit: <https://rb.gy/epi7qv>.
- If you must spend time outdoors, a well-constructed, well-fitting and properly worn respirator type mask (such as a NIOSH-certified N95 or equivalent respirator) can reduce your exposure to particulate matter. Even though exposure may be reduced, there can still be risks to health.
- Avoid roads with heavy vehicle traffic and areas with wood smoke.

## Emission reduction actions

### Mandatory actions

- Facilities with air discharge authorizations under the Environmental Management Act are required to follow trigger actions within their permit related to Air Quality Warnings and are encouraged to reduce any other emissions where possible.
- Houston bylaw 947 restricts the use of wood burning appliances during air quality advisories:
  - **2.1.1:** No person shall use a wood burning appliance at any time when an air quality advisory is in effect, except to heat premises that are equipped with no heating appliance or facilities other than the wood burning appliance.
  - Contact the Houston municipal office at [250-845-2238](tel:250-845-2238) for more information on woodstove restrictions.
- As pollution is occurring or is likely to occur from open burning, pursuant to Sections 30(1) and 30(2) of the Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation, the Director has prohibited open burning within 50 km from the Houston firehall until November 06, 2025 3:00 PM local time. No vegetative debris may be ignited or

added to ignited piles. Contravention of these provisions may be subject to a fine under the Regulation.

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Benjamin Weinstein

For Director, Environmental Management Act

Environmental Monitoring and Analysis Branch

### **Voluntary actions**

- Avoid using wood stoves and fireplaces unless it is the sole heating source. If wood burning is the sole heating source, burn dry, seasoned wood and ensure an adequate supply of combustion air.
- Reduce vehicle use where possible and avoid idling vehicles.

### **More information**

#### **Current conditions**

Fine particulate matter refers to airborne solid or liquid droplets with diameters of 2.5 micrometers ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) or less.  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  levels tend to be highest around busy roads, industrial operations and neighbourhoods with residential wood burning.  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  can easily penetrate indoors because of their small size. Common sources of  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  that contribute to episodes of poor air quality vary seasonally but can include wood smoke (from wood stoves and/or open burning) as well as emissions from industry and transportation sources such as automobiles, trucks and rail traffic.

The provincial air quality objective for  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  is 25 micrograms per cubic metre ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) averaged over 24 hours. 24-hour average  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  concentrations are summarized below for Houston and nearest monitored communities at 3:00 PM local time today:

Community	Houston	Burns Lake	Prince George	Smithers	Vanderhoof
24-hr average ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )	5.1	11.1	9.5	3.4	6.2

**For additional information about air quality in British Columbia**

- View the latest [Air Quality Health Index \(AQHI\) and forecast](#)
- Visit the provincial [air quality map](#) to view real-time air quality measurements
- Visit the provincial air quality data webpage for more information about air quality in B.C.
- [Metro Vancouver's Air Quality Data and Warnings](#)

## Contact

**Media questions regarding this Air Quality Warning**

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**Media questions regarding health implications related to impaired air quality**

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