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Burn ban in effect across Dufferin County

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A complete burn ban is now in effect across Dufferin County as dry conditions and wildfire smoke increase fire risks and affect local air quality.

The Dufferin County Fire Chiefs declared the ban effective July 15, prohibiting all open-air burning and fires of any kind until further notice.

Fire officials said the combination of extremely dry conditions and poor air quality caused by wildfire smoke has created a higher risk of fires spreading out of control.

The ban is intended to reduce the risk of wildfires while preventing additional smoke from entering the air.

Residents are reminded to monitor local air quality conditions and limit outdoor activities, especially if they experience health impacts from the smoke.

Smoke from wildfires in northwestern Ontario has resulted in reduced air quality and visibility across Dufferin County. Exposure to wildfire smoke can affect the heart and lungs and may worsen symptoms for people with existing health conditions.

Residents are encouraged to reduce time spent outdoors, avoid strenuous activities, and consider rescheduling outdoor sports, activities, and events while air quality is poor.

Symptoms from wildfire smoke exposure can include eye, nose and throat irritation, headaches and mild coughing. More serious symptoms, such as wheezing, chest pain or severe coughing, should be treated as a medical concern.

Those most vulnerable to wildfire smoke include adults 65 and older, pregnant women, infants and young children, people with chronic illnesses, and those who work outdoors.

Residents can help improve indoor air quality by keeping windows and doors closed, using the highest-quality air filter their ventilation system can support, and using a certified portable air cleaner that filters fine particles.

If spending time outdoors is unavoidable, a properly fitted respirator-style mask can help reduce exposure to smoke particles.

Dufferin County is also reminding residents to take precautions as hot weather continues. People are encouraged to drink plenty of water, limit time in the heat and never leave children or pets unattended in vehicles.

Residents without air conditioning are encouraged to keep windows, doors and blinds closed during the day to reduce heat exposure. If air quality improves and temperatures drop overnight, opening windows can help cool the home.

People are reminded to watch for signs of heat illness, including headaches, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, fainting, rapid breathing or a rapid heartbeat.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency. Call 911 if someone experiences confusion, loss of consciousness, seizures, a very high body temperature, or hot, dry skin or excessive sweating.

For more information on air quality and wildfire smoke, visit Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's outdoor air quality resources.