

## **DNR ISSUES AIR QUALITY ADVISORY FOR DODGE, WAUKESHA, MILWAUKEE, RACINE & KENOSHA COUNTIES**

**MILWAUKEE** – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has issued an updated air quality advisory for fine particles (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) which will remain in effect until 11 p.m. tonight. This “red” advisory, which replaces the current lesser “orange” advisory, affects people living in the counties of Waukesha, Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha. The updated “red” air quality advisory reflects that the air quality index is currently at the unhealthy level for all people in the counties of Waukesha, Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha, based on exposures over the past 24 hours. Current pollutant concentrations are decreasing rapidly and cleaner air is moving in.

An orange advisory is extended for Dodge County where the air quality index remains at the unhealthy level for people in sensitive groups. These groups include children, the elderly, individuals with respiratory and cardiac problems or anyone engaged in strenuous outdoor activities for a prolonged period of time.

It is anticipated that by this afternoon no sites will have an air quality index that is at unhealthy levels for all people. By tonight, it is forecasted that all counties in Wisconsin will no longer be in any air quality index category classified as unhealthy for anyone.

This air pollution is not due to local sources. The Pagami Creek forest fire continues to burn in Minnesota and the DNR and the Department of Health (DHS) will continue to monitor this situation. The fire now covers approximately 100,000 acres (155 square miles) in the boundary waters of Northeastern Minnesota.

The last time a “Red Level” air quality advisory was issued by the DNR was on December 20, 2007 for fine particles in the same area.

The federal 24 hour fine particle standard is measured using the average of hourly concentrations for each monitor over a 24 hour period. When Wisconsin issues advisories they are based on the previous 24 hours of exposure to fine particles.

Health effects caused by the 24 plus hour exposure and the peak levels remain a concern. The advisory level health effects from fine particle exposures often do not show up for 24-72 hours after a pollution episode. Individuals should monitor their symptoms and consult a physician if they have concerns. In healthy people, symptoms of smoke exposure usually include irritation of eyes, nose and throat, or breathing discomfort and more severe symptoms may include chest tightness, wheezing, shortness of breath, and coughing. Smoke exposure can aggravate chronic lung or cardiovascular disease

National Weather Service offices in Wisconsin are saying that smoke and ash from the forest fire may once again impact Wisconsin in the coming days. However, the NWS notes that there is much uncertainty with this forecast. DHS continues to work with local

health departments and the DNR to get information out to the public. Listen for news updates on the smoke in your area. Continue to follow all precautions and instructions given by local health and governmental departments

For current information on air quality readings, please call the Daily Air Hotline at 1-866-DailyAir (1-866-324-5924).

For additional information, contact Bart Sponseller, DNR (608) 266-1058 or via email at [Bart.Sponseller@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Bart.Sponseller@wisconsin.gov) , Anne Bogar at (608) 266-3725 or Dr. Rob Thiboldeaux, DHS (608) 267-6844 or via email at [Robert.Thiboldeaux@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Robert.Thiboldeaux@dhs.wisconsin.gov).