



Montana High School Association

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IMPACT OF AIR QUALITY ON HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Because of the concerns about smoke problems as related to high school athletic practices for the fall season in Montana, the following interpretations are provided:

- The number of required practices for each of the fall sports (golf, volleyball, cross country, football and soccer) **cannot be waived**. The legal ramifications of a waiver, which would occur because of the safety/health purposes of the practice rules, would be prohibitive.
- Any postponements, reschedulings or cancellations of contests must be arranged by the schools involved within the established dates for the season. There is no rule that would prohibit two football games in a week.
- The seasons cannot be lengthened because of the overlapping problems with the winter sports if fall sports were extended in any manner.
- Some districts and/or divisions might have to revisit their seeding formulas for post season play because of schools not playing the same number of games as a result of the fire/smoke situations throughout the state. Realizing that many areas have different policies about practices because of poor air quality, each school district has the autonomy to determine what is safe for the students involved in any particular sports' preparation.

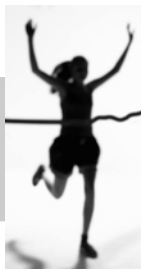
Resources:

- Attached are guidelines for your use in making recommendations for outdoor events during wildfire season.
- For more information, visit Montana's website for the Department of Environmental Quality at www.deq.mt.gov or <http://todaysair.mt.gov>.

If there are questions concerning decisions that must be made, schools can contact the MHSA office by phone (442-6010) or e-mail (mbeckman@mhsa.org).

/jpa

Attached



Decision making recommendations during wildfire season for

Outdoor Sporting Events

based on visibility and air quality

Health Effect Category*	Visibility†	Recommendation
Good	13.4 miles and up	Hold outdoor sporting events as usual. Athletes with asthma should keep rescue inhalers at hand. Athletes with other smoke related sensitivities should take precautions as symptoms dictate.
Moderate/ Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	5.1 to 13.3 miles	Hold outdoor sporting events as usual. Athletes with asthma should have rescue inhalers readily available and pretreat before exercise as directed by their healthcare provider. All athletes with respiratory illness should limit outdoor activity, monitor symptoms and reduce/cease activity if symptoms arise.
Unhealthy	2.2 to 5.0 miles	Consider postponing/delaying outdoor sporting events, especially high exertion activities like soccer and track and field. If possible, move athletic practices indoors. If event/practice is held, athletes with asthma or other respiratory illnesses are advised not to participate. All athletes should limit their outdoor activity for prolonged periods of time.
Very Unhealthy	1.3 to 2.1 miles	Consider postponing/delaying all outdoor sporting events. Move all athletic practices indoors. All athletes with asthma and other respiratory illnesses are advised to stay indoors. All others should avoid prolonged exertion outdoors.
Hazardous	1.3 miles or less	Cancel all outdoor sporting events or relocate to an indoor location. Move all athletic practices indoors.

At all times, athletes experiencing respiratory symptoms should consult their personal healthcare provider

*For more information on the health effect categories visit the “Today’s Air” website run by the Department of Environmental Quality at <http://todaysair.mt.gov> Air monitoring stations exist in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Hamilton, Helena, Kalispell, Libby, Missoula, and West Yellowstone. The Today’s Air website has hourly updates on the health effect category at these sites based on measured particulate matter levels. All other locations must determine the health effect category at their location based on visibility.

† To determine visibility:

1. Face away from the sun
2. Determine the limit of your visible range by looking for targets at known distances
3. Visible range is that point at which even high contrast objects totally disappear

Use the values above to determine the local forest fire smoke category



For more information contact the State Medical Officer
Steven Helgerson, MD, MPH at shelgerson@mt.gov

<http://todaysair.mt.gov>

