

Special Air Quality Statement

June 7, 2023

Environment Canada and the Province of Ontario have issued a [special air quality statement](#) for the City of Toronto. High levels of air pollution due to smoke from forest fires in Quebec and northeastern Ontario have resulted in deteriorated air quality. During an air quality event, it is important to be aware of the potential health concerns associated with poor air quality and take appropriate steps to reduce your exposure.

Though it is not a common practice for Health, Safety and Employee Well-Being (HSEWB) to issue guidance around outdoor air quality, given the current situation, we ask that Managers of those that may be working outdoors, to please share this information with your employees.

Air Quality Health Index

The AQHI provides a number on a 1 to 10 scale to indicate the level of relative health risk associated with local air quality. This scale is intended as a self-calibrating tool. The higher the AQHI number, the greater the potential health risk and need to take precautions. Recommended actions can change throughout the day. Visit https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/provincial_summary/on_e.html to get the most up to date guidance.

Indoor Air Quality

Please note that our ventilation systems operate by circulating fresh air into our buildings. Unfortunately, at this time, the outdoor air contains a smoky odour. The HVAC filtration on campus will remove particles found in the air, but the odour of smoke will remain as long as it is also present outdoors.

Guidance for Managers

- Depending on the current air quality health index, Managers should reschedule or consider rescheduling outdoor activities that require a higher level of physical effort.
- Management may need to implement controls for work that is going to be conducted outdoors for extended periods to ensure it can be conducted safely.
- If an employee seeks medical attention because of a work-related activity, please ensure a [Workplace Incident Report](#) is completed and submitted to wir@yorku.ca within 24hrs.

- Reach out to your area Health and Safety Advisor should you require further support and recommendations.
- To contact HSEWB: hsewb@yorku.ca or 416-736-2100 ext 55491.
- To contact Facilities Services: facilities@yorku.ca or 416-736-2100 ext 22401.

Next Steps

The University will continue to monitor the air quality conditions and will advise Community Members accordingly if there are any further recommendations.

For More Information

https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/provincial_summary/on_e.html

www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/air-quality-health-index/wildfire-smoke.html.

www.airhealth.ca

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/using-portable-air-cleaner-wildfire-smoke.html>.

<https://www.alberta.ca/about-the-air-quality-health-index.aspx>

Health, Safety & Employee Well-Being

416-736-2100 ext 55491

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Kinsmen Building