



Ministry of
Environment



June 10, 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

AIR QUALITY ADVISORY IN EFFECT

OPEN BURNING, WOOD BURNING, AND STREET AND PARKING LOT SWEEPING PROHIBITED

The Ministry of Environment in collaboration with Northern Health, is issuing an Air Quality Advisory for Prince George due to high levels of coarse particulate matter. All residents are advised that these high levels of particulate matter could have adverse health effects in children, the elderly and individuals with pre-existing heart and lung disease. Residents especially those at high risk should consider reducing strenuous outdoor activities during the advisory and/or adjusting any medication in consultation with their physician.

The Air Quality objective for PM₁₀ is 50 µg/m³ for a 24 hour average. Residents should be aware that advisories are only issued when the air quality objective is exceeded but that the majority of adverse health effects are due to long term exposure to particulate matter starting at levels well below 50 µg/m³

Residents are reminded that the City's Clean Air Bylaw prohibits the use of wood-burning appliances, except for Sole Wood Burning Heat Users, and that open burning; including backyard burning and land clearing burning is banned during Air Quality Advisories. Please note that this advisory also prohibits recreational fires and street sweeping activities. Industry is asked to reduce emissions wherever possible during the air quality advisory.

For information on particulate matter levels, please call the 24 hour Ministry of Environment Air Quality Index Line at (250) 565-6457 or check the Ministry's website at <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/aqiis/air.summary>.

For information on the City's Clean Air Bylaw, please contact City Hall at (250) 561-7600 or visit the City's website at www.city.pg.bc.ca

For information on the effects of air quality on persons with respiratory or cardiac illnesses please contact Northern Health at (250) 565- 2150 or visit the Northern Health website at www.Northernhealth.ca

Based on the air quality data, the high levels are mainly due to dust with some contribution from combustion emissions (smoke) this morning. Very dry conditions over the region resulted in particulates accumulating in the air shed. Particulate levels are expected to be high in the mornings and again in the late evenings. The 24 hour PM₁₀ rolling average was 49 µg/m³ at the Plaza 400 downtown at 8:00 am, 42 µg/m³ at BCR and 21 µg/m³ at College Heights. The 24 hour PM_{2.5} rolling average was 13 µg/m³ at the Plaza 400 downtown site and 7 µg/m³ at College Heights. This Air Quality Advisory is expected to be in effect until further notice, with an update to be provided this afternoon at 4:30 pm.