



Bulletin: Questions and Answers Rankin Inlet dump fire

June 25, 2014

Q: What is in the dump fire smoke?

A: The smoke contains a mixture of chemicals and fine particles, depending on what is burning and the burn temperature at the time. Typically, the dump holds materials such as plastic, wood, metal, paper, cardboard, food and electronics.

Q: How often will smoke blow into the community?

A: There will be times when smoke from the Rankin Inlet dump fire blows into the community.

Q: What should I do if smoke blows into the community?

A: You should minimize your exposure to smoke by staying indoors as much as possible. Keep your doors and windows closed, and set air exchangers to recirculate indoor air or turn them off. If the smoke is still getting into your home, you should consider going to a family member or friend's house in another part of the community where there is less smoke. If you have to go outside, limit physical activity.

Q: What are the health effects from the smoke?

A: Smoke can be irritating to the eyes, nose and throat and may cause nausea. Some people may be more at risk than others to health effects from the smoke. This includes people with chronic lung and heart disease. Young children may also be more at risk because their respiratory systems are still developing and they breathe in more air for their weight than adults. Pregnant women should also protect themselves from exposure to smoke.

Q. What are long-term health effects from exposure to smoke from the dump fire?

A: The long-term risks from short-term exposure to smoke from the dump fire are expected to be quite low.

Q: What symptoms should I look for?

A: You should watch for wheezing, shortness of breath, tightness in your chest, light headedness and dizziness. The smoke may also be irritating to your eyes, nose and throat and may cause nausea.

Q: What should I do if I develop symptoms related to the smoke, like trouble breathing or tightness in my chest?

A: If you don't feel well and can't manage your symptoms on your own, you should seek medical attention.

Q. Will wearing a mask help to reduce exposure to smoke?

A: We are not recommending masks for the public. Surgical masks are not helpful because they don't filter out the particulates. We recommend minimizing your exposure, rather than wearing a mask that may not be effective.

Q: Is there anything else people can do to protect themselves?

A: You should decrease your exposure to smoke from the dump fire. Try to stay indoors as much as possible. Keep your windows and doors shut, and set air exchangers to recirculate indoor air or turn them off. Don't smoke indoors, as this will cause the air quality to deteriorate quickly. Limit your outdoor activities.

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