



Smoke Ready Week Communications and Outreach Toolkit

Toolkit Goals

- Provide accurate and consistent information about the health effects of wildfire smoke, current science about how to protect public health, and ways to support others.
- Coordinate communication efforts across multiple agencies/organizations for maximum impact during the awareness week and throughout the year.
- Analyze the impact of communication and design strategies by reviewing and quantifying the impact of the campaign shared online and in-person.

Summary

Every June the Northwest Air Quality Communicators (NWAQC) group hosts Smoke Ready week to share information with the public about smoke from fires (wildfires, prescribed burns, wood stoves), how smoke impacts health, and what people can do to reduce their exposure to smoke. Being smoke ready means that communities and individuals have the knowledge and ability to stay safe and healthy during smoke episodes. By sharing this information, you can help your community be #SmokeReady.

Each day of Smoke Ready week has a theme that features a specific topic related to smoke. While Smoke Ready week is just a single week, wildfire smoke in the Pacific Northwest happens regularly in the summer and fall from June through October. Communities across our region experience smoke year round due to residential wood burning and other household sources of air pollution. By posting on social media at the start of the awareness week and throughout the summer, users of this toolkit are educating and warning the public about a serious health concern. This toolkit empowers public agencies and community based organizations to amplify public awareness and to promote protective behaviors for everyone.

The Northwest Air Quality Communicators is a consortium of communicators from federal, state, provincial, tribal and local air quality and health agencies focused on increasing the public's understanding and capacity to reduce exposure and protect their health.



Content Tools & Guidelines

The assets in this toolkit are intended to foster online recognition of messaging related to the campaign and to be simple, replicable, and flexible enough for use in different roles in relation to emergency preparedness and risk communication.

These visuals are a template for risk communications in captions, audio, or other visual content. These may be replicated on social media, on agency websites, presentations— any way you want to share #SmokeReady.

NWAQC has created graphics without agency logos that can be adapted or shared for use by others. **These assets are available in the [NWAQC Google Drive](#).** Previous years' smoke ready week resources are available [here](#) in the google drive.

When posting, use the following hashtags below so that all the posts are tied together. We will be measuring our engagement in the Fall with those who have shared graphics and information.

- **#SmokeReady**
- **#SmokeReadyTogether**
- **#SmokeReadyNW**

Links

- [Smoke Ready Concept Guide](#)
- [Smoke Ready Digital Assets](#) for social media
- [Smoke Ready Captions](#) for social media



Smoke Ready Week 2023 Themes: June 12-16

6/12, Monday – Learn About Smoke

- *What's in smoke, what are the sources*

6/13, Tuesday – Stay informed about air quality

- *Where to find air quality information*
 - Example: EPA fire & smoke map, AQI, state smoke blogs, phone apps, where you can find a trusted information in your community

6/14, Wednesday – Smoke and Your Health

- *Health impacts of smoke and who is at increased risk*

6/15, Thursday - Strategies to minimize smoke exposure

- *Keep indoor air quality clean*
 - Example: Indoor air filtration: HEPA portable air cleaners, DIY box fan filter kits
 - Example: Creating a clean room

6/16, Friday – Preventing Smoke

- *Wildfire prevention and alternatives to burning*
 - Example: Prescribed burns
 - Example: Preparing firewood for clean burning in wood stoves
 - Example: Not dragging chains, etc
 - Example: Outdoor burn info
 - Example: Prepping defensible space



Examples of Social Media Posts

These images and more can be found [here](#)

Want to add to the toolkit? You can make your own social media posts (images, infographics, videos, etc.) using the concept guide above. If you have questions, please email nwaqc@googlegroups.com



Example caption: What's in smoke? From wildfires to wood stoves, understanding smoke sources is the first step to being #SmokeReady. Smoke contains a mixture of harmful substances like particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds. Stay informed, stay safe.



Day 2 of #SmokeReady Week is all about "Finding information about smoke". With wildfires, it's crucial to know where to get reliable information about smoke conditions. Use resources like the Air Quality Index (AQI), your local air regulator [*insert applicable organization*], and apps like AirNow or visiting <https://fire.airnow.gov/> to stay updated. Remember, being #SmokeReady means being informed.



Example caption: Breathing wildfire smoke can worsen many health problems and cause minor to serious symptoms like headaches, stinging eyes, coughing, trouble breathing, asthma attacks and chest pain. Smoke is unhealthy for everyone, but there are some people especially sensitive to health effects from smoke and should take extra steps to protect themselves. What can you do to protect your home or your community from wildfire smoke?



What does Smoke Ready Mean?

This work comes from many years of our communities experiencing disasters, creating cultures of resilience, and the wisdom to know that being prepared is important and not optional. We know that being prepared is the best way to reduce fear and anxiety, to prevent poor health outcomes, and to reduce losses that accompany disasters.

As a communications campaign, Smoke Ready focuses on building a network of agencies and organizations sharing consistent information as a base to better build on diverse approaches to being prepared. By using similar information, digital assets, and brand recognition, we can work together to influence public perception and build trust in information being shared, effectively communicating readiness across diverse communities.

Being smoke ready depends on who you are, where you live, and what resources you have available. For a majority of people in America, preparedness is “not on their radar” ([FEMA, 2014](#)) and that “preparedness” is a hard ask for those who are unable to invest in costly measures to protect themselves. We all want resilient communities, and so we need to recognize that resilience is a result of experiencing hardship under ideal conditions that sustain strong cultural values and familiarity with those we respect and honor. We also recognize that households and individuals are not at risk simply due to exposure, but are at risk because some live in permanent states of emergency from being marginalized due to their social and economic realities. A communications campaign will not reasonably alter conditions for our audiences. However, we present this year’s material and past Smoke Ready material with the hope that we can open conversations on what it means to be “better prepared” with agencies that commit to sharing this information.

Generally, being smoke ready means that communities and individuals have the knowledge and ability to stay safe and healthy during smoke episodes ([Interagency Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program](#)). This means not only knowing the sources and causes of wildfire smoke, but also requires having resources to protect ourselves from the negative effects ([Okanogan Clean Air](#)).

We share these with the hopes that it helps local engagement efforts to build out a recognizable concept. We share our knowledge and wisdom with the caveat that local engagement produces the best results. Your community wants to know:

- What are best practices that you know of to be #SmokeReady?
- What does transformational community engagement look like?
- What have you done to normalize preparedness concepts and language?
- What responses can we model in other communities?



Other Messaging Resources:

Smoke Ready - Okanogan Clean Air

www.smokeready.org

*design files and PDFs are in the [NWAQC Google Drive](#)

Interagency Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program

<https://www.wildlandfiresmoke.net/smoke-ready>

Public Alerts

www.publicalerts.org/messaging-tools

Resources for Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness - Change Matrix

<https://changematrix.org/cultural-and-linguistic-responsiveness-emergency-preparedness-and-post-event-considerations/>

Do you have information or resources that you want to share? Email nwaqc@googlegroups.com to add a resource here!



Impact Analysis and Campaign Evaluation

Examining where strategic efforts are succeeding and where it needs improvement requires measuring effectiveness of our activities. Communications metrics helps organizations and government agencies illustrate experiences of being #SmokeReady and reach of their campaigns in order to

- spot trends in perception and behavior
- conceptualize conversations, interactions, and sentiments– what is being said and how it's being received
- identify high value communications and engagement tactics that can be replicated
- quantify social impact and reach to improve operations and drive strategic decisions.

Measuring Impact

The following will be considered to measure impact during wildfire seasons (June to September):

- Click throughs: Website visits to #SmokeReady content
- Interactions: likes, views/impressions, comments, and shares with posts over time and across platforms
- Advertisements: Paid social media analytics (if used)
- Influencer/collaborator analytics (if possible)
- Sentiment: campaign growth and reactions over time (across years)
- Community engagement: number of participants

By measuring impact, #SmokeReady participants can analyze audience demographics and understand who is tuned in to Smoke Ready information and gaps where engagement efforts can be improved locally and regionally.

Analytics Tracking Tool

Coming September 2023



Considerations for Equity and Inclusion

Now more than ever, it is critical to recognize how natural disasters such as wildfires amplify existing inequalities and how risk communicators can lessen the resulting harms. Government agencies must communicate in ways that reestablish trust in communities that have been historically ignored in disaster response and communication. Community organizations can assist in this effort by working in collaboration to share information and raise their capacity in parallel to their awareness. Through strong partnerships, collaboration can increase community organizations' ability to conduct effective outreach and prevention through authentic networks of information, while maintaining a level of reliability and accuracy.

To make our interest known publicly for equity and inclusion in assisting affected communities, our efforts must overcome language barriers with individuals/households with limited English proficiency (LEP). When disaster strikes, effective communication with LEP individuals is necessary to ensure that they understand where to find information and how to protect their health. To be most effective with timing and limited resources as a collective group, materials in this toolkit will be translated in several languages and included below.

To take this work further, future outreach efforts must take into account concerns of local communities, and efforts should be made to explore and document opportunities where #SmokeReady evolves to include training in building response procedures, training exercises, or assessments/evaluations of readiness. We encourage those interested in this to continually adapt the information shared into campaigns of trans-creation— highlighting the creativity and ingenuity of local communities to share information in new and interesting ways.

Do you have informational tools or stories you want to share? Email nwagc@googlegroups.com to add them to the Google Drive!

Translated Source Materials

TBA