



HEALTH HUB WILDFIRES

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WELCOME TO The August Health Hub

Wildfires

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Wildfires and smoke are on all our minds this year. With record-breaking wildfires occurring across the state of Utah and even in Salt Lake County, it is more important than ever to reduce the risk of human-caused ignitions and be prepared for evacuations. A single spark from a campfire, trailer chain, fireworks, or equipment can quickly become a fast-moving wildfire when vegetation is dry.



Wildfires can have immediate impacts on people, property, infrastructure, and the environment. While some communities face the direct threat of flames, others may experience hazardous smoke, road closures, or disruptions to daily life hundreds of miles away. Understanding these risks can help you prepare and protect yourself, your family, and your community. While the following are not a holistic list of impacts



Immediate Impacts to Health and Safety

- Damage or loss of homes, businesses, and other structures from flames or embers
- Exposure to extreme heat and rapidly changing fire conditions
- Heavy smoke and poor air quality that can affect everyone, especially children, older adults, and people with heart or lung conditions
- Evacuation orders, road closures, and blocked travel routes
- Power outages and disruptions to communications or essential services
- Reduced visibility that can make driving and outdoor activities hazardous

Long-term Impacts

- Respiratory and cardiovascular health effects from prolonged smoke exposure
- Increased risk of flooding, erosion, and mudslides in burned areas after storms
- Reduced water quality from ash, sediment, and debris entering watershed
- Damage to wildlife habitat, forests, and recreational areas
- Financial hardship from property damage, lost income, or recovery costs
- Housing instability for residents whose homes have been damaged or destroyed
- Emotional and mental health impacts, including stress, anxiety, and trauma



10 Ways You Can Help

1. Follow local fire restrictions and avoid activities that could create sparks in dry conditions.
2. Do not light fires in areas where they are restricted
3. Do not light fireworks in areas where they are restricted
4. Limit driving or parking on dry vegetation
5. Create defensible space around your home by clearing dry vegetation and combustible materials.
6. Have an evacuation plan and emergency kit ready before wildfire threatens your area.
7. Monitor local air quality and limit outdoor activity when air quality is unhealthy.
8. Sign up for local emergency alerts and follow guidance from public safety officials.
9. Check on neighbors, friends, and family members who may need additional support during wildfire events
10. Properly dispose of cigarettes and smoking materials—never toss lit cigarette butts from vehicles or onto the ground, as they can easily ignite dry grass and vegetation. This is a common source of human caused wildfires.

Wildfires & Sustainability

As wildfire seasons become longer and more intense, sustainability plays an increasingly important role in protecting our communities. Reducing emissions, clean watersheds, and resilient landscapes help reduce wildfire impacts while supporting clean air, safe drinking water, wildlife, and recreation.

By preventing human-caused ignitions and preparing our homes and neighborhoods for wildfire, we can all contribute to a healthier, safer, and more resilient future.



Thank you to anyone who is involved within fire response from local firefighters, volunteers, emergency management, forest service and all others who support these efforts.

If you want to learn more about the effects of wildfire smoke. The EPA has created great [factsheets](#).



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