



SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT ANNOUNCEMENTS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 23, 2019

South Coast AQMD Extends Smoke Advisory Due to a Debris Fire in City of Thermal

Valid: Weds., October 23, through Thurs., October 24, 2019

This advisory is in effect through Thursday afternoon. South Coast AQMD will issue an update if additional information becomes available.

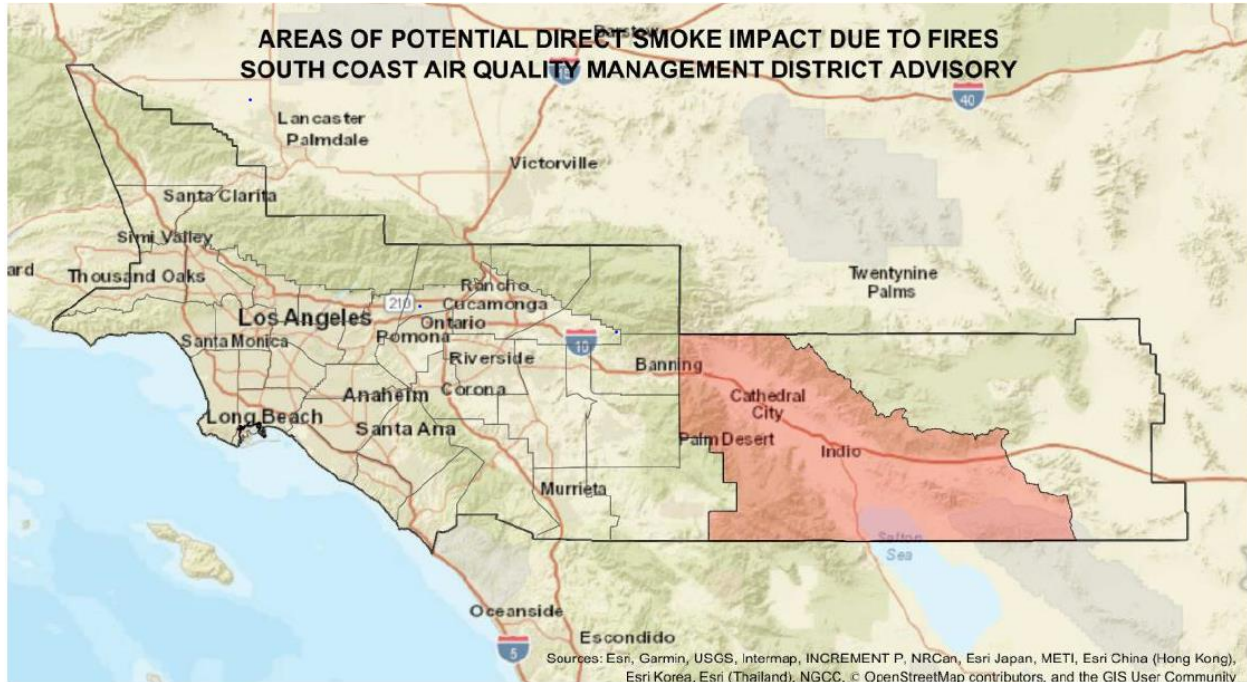
A large debris fire is burning near the intersection of Avenue 66 and Martinez Road in the city of Thermal in the Coachella Valley. The burn area is approximately 35 acres. Smoke from the fire has been impacting Thermal, La Quinta, and Mecca, as well as communities near the Salton Sea. The South Coast AQMD has deployed two temporary PM2.5 monitors west of the fire in Thermal and east of the fire in Mecca. Visit <https://xappprod.aqmd.gov/SMSDataSite/Home/AdminIndex?MonitoringSiteId=13> to view current readings from the South Coast AQMD's monitor in Thermal and <https://xappprod.aqmd.gov/SMSDataSite/Home/AdminIndex?MonitoringSiteId=14> to view current readings from the South Coast AQMD's monitor in Mecca.

On Wednesday afternoon, winds are predicted to be from the southeast, pushing smoke towards the northwest towards La Quinta and Thermal. On Wednesday evening into the overnight hours, winds are expected to come from the west, pushing smoke towards Mecca. On Thursday morning, winds are predicted to be from the north, pushing smoke to the south towards Borrego Springs and elevated ground level concentrations of PM2.5 are expected in the early morning hours. If the fire continues to generate smoke, impacts are expected to continue throughout the Coachella Valley.

Overall, meteorological conditions may bring smoke and ash into portions of the Coachella Valley. Air quality may reach **Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups** or higher in areas directly impacted by smoke.

Areas of direct impacts and poor air quality may include portions of:

- **Riverside County:** Coachella Valley (Area 30)



In any area impacted by smoke: If you smell smoke or see ash due to a wildfire, limit your exposure by remaining indoors with windows and doors closed or seeking alternate shelter, and avoiding vigorous physical activity. For more tips on protecting yourself during a wildfire, see South Coast AQMD's Wildfire Smoke & Ash Health & Safety Tips page: <http://www.aqmd.gov/wildfire-health-info-smoke-tips>.

Previous Smoke Impacts

At the monitor in Thermal, since early Wednesday morning, 24-hour average PM_{2.5} concentrations have been between 10 and 15 micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m³), resulting in **Good** to **Moderate** Air Quality Index (AQI) levels. The highest hourly concentrations were seen in the morning hours on Tuesday and Wednesday, with a peak hourly concentration of 68 ug/m³. While it is not recommended to derive AQI categories from a single hourly PM_{2.5} measurement, guidance for a one-hour average concentration in this range is similar to the guidance for the **Moderate** AQI category. Visit <https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/public-information/document/wildfirev8.pdf> for recommended actions based on shorter averaging times.

At the monitor in Mecca, since early Wednesday morning, 24-hour average PM_{2.5} concentrations have been between 5 and 10 ug/m³, resulting in **Good** AQI levels. The highest hourly concentrations were seen in the morning hours on Tuesday and Wednesday, with a peak hourly concentration of 35 ug/m³. While it is not recommended to derive AQI categories from a single hourly PM_{2.5} measurement, guidance for a one-hour average concentration in this range is similar to the guidance for the **Good** AQI category.

Note that in the afternoon hours, the AQI due to ozone concentrations, which is not caused by the fire, reached the **Moderate** category in the Coachella Valley.

- South Coast AQMD Advisory updates can be found at the following link: www.aqmd.gov/advisory
- To subscribe to air quality alerts, advisories and forecasts by email, go to www.AirAlerts.org

- To view current air quality conditions by region in an interactive map, see www.aqmd.gov/aqimap
- For real-time air quality information, maps, notifications and health alerts in your area, download our award-winning South Coast AQMD app at: www.aqmd.gov/mobileapp
- Air quality forecasts are available at <http://www.aqmd.gov/forecast>
- For a map of South Coast AQMD Forecast Areas, see <http://www.aqmd.gov/ForecastAreas>

South Coast AQMD is the air pollution control agency for Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, including the Coachella Valley. For news, air quality alerts, event updates and more, please visit us at www.aqmd.gov, download our award-winning app, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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