



Chaffee County Public Health

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July 1, 2026

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Chaffee County Public Health Urges Residents to Monitor Air Quality as Regional Wildfire Smoke Continues

Chaffee County, CO — Chaffee County residents have likely noticed hazy skies and the smell of smoke over the past several days. While no large wildfire is currently burning within Chaffee County, smoke from multiple wildfires along the Colorado–Utah border and in neighboring mountain communities has affected air quality throughout much of western and central Colorado. State health officials have issued recurring Air Quality Health Advisories for Wildfire Smoke for Chaffee County and many surrounding counties as smoke conditions continue to shift with changing weather patterns.

Wildfire smoke can travel hundreds of miles and conditions can change quickly depending on wind direction, fire activity, and weather. Air quality in Chaffee County has fluctuated significantly, with overnight particulate levels reaching unhealthy ranges in some locations before improving during the day. Because smoke conditions are highly dynamic, residents are encouraged to monitor air quality frequently before spending extended time outdoors.

Chaffee County Public Health oversees a network of 4 PurpleAir monitors strategically located throughout the county to provide near real-time air quality information. In addition, other PurpleAir monitors are located in a variety of locations around the county. Residents are encouraged to use the PurpleAir map to monitor conditions where they live.

- **PurpleAir Chaffee County Map:** <https://www2.purpleair.com/search?q=chaffee+county%2C+co>
- **Colorado Air Quality Advisories:**
https://www.colorado.gov/airquality/colo_advisory.aspx?county=chaffee

Chaffee County Public Health's Vision: *All people in Chaffee County have opportunities to achieve healthy and connected lives in a community that embraces every aspect of health and well-being.*



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While wildfire smoke can affect everyone, some people are more sensitive, including:

- Infants and young children
- Older adults
- Pregnant individuals
- People with asthma, COPD, or other lung diseases
- Individuals with heart disease

If smoke is thick or becomes thick in your neighborhood, consider remaining indoors, especially if you are in one of these higher-risk groups.

When smoke levels increase:

- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed whenever possible.
- Reduce prolonged or strenuous outdoor activities.
- Run air conditioning on recirculate if available.
- Use a portable HEPA air purifier if possible.
- If smoke enters your home and begins causing symptoms, consider temporarily relocating to a location with cleaner air.
- If visibility is less than approximately 5 miles due to smoke, air pollution has likely reached levels that are unhealthy.

Residents with asthma or other chronic respiratory conditions should ensure they have needed medications readily available and follow their healthcare provider's recommendations.

"We know residents are seeing and smelling the smoke, and many are wondering what it means for their health," said Chaffee County Public Health Director Andrea Carlstrom. "Our PurpleAir monitoring network provides one of the best ways to understand what conditions are like in your specific area because air quality can vary considerably across the county and even throughout the day."

Chaffee County Public Health will continue sharing notable air quality updates and health recommendations through its Facebook page and local media as conditions warrant.

Residents and visitors may stop by the CCPH office at 448 East 1st Street, Suite 137 in Salida or at 114 Linderman Ave in Buena Vista during business hours (be aware of reduced hours due to the holiday) to pick up a mask if they would like to use one while outdoors. Masks will be available while supplies last.

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