



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Health Services

---

Scott Walker, Governor  
Dennis G. Smith, Secretary

For Immediate Release  
September 13, 2011

Contact: Beth Kaplan  
(608) 266-1683

## SMOKE PLUME FROM MINNESOTA FOREST FIRE MAY AFFECT INDIVIDUALS WITH RESPIRATORY AND HEART PROBLEMS

*State officials provide health precaution information*

MADISON - State health officials are monitoring a large smoke plume from a forest fire in northeastern Minnesota. The plume is moving through Wisconsin.

“The Department of Natural Resources has not issued an air quality alert, but temporary peaks in pollutants are occurring around the state. This can cause problems for people with respiratory and heart problems,” said Dr. Henry Anderson, State Health Officer. “People with such health problems should consider staying indoors, closing windows and using an air conditioner with a high efficiency air filter.”

Anderson said local health departments are receiving calls about heavy smoke odors, ash and concerns about smoke inhalation. He noted that in healthy people, symptoms of smoke exposure usually include irritation of eyes, nose and throat, or breathing discomfort, and more severe symptoms may include chest tightness, wheezing, shortness of breath, and coughing. Smoke exposure can aggravate chronic lung or cardiovascular disease.

“Concerned citizens should listen for news updates on air quality and visibility and follow all precautions and instructions given by local health and governmental departments,” Anderson said.

###