

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 18, 2015

**Contact:** Ryan Mims  
(850) 833-9240 ext. 2162  
Cell: (850) 420-2198

**HEALTH OFFICIALS ADVISE TO TAKE HEALTH PRECAUTIONS  
IN AREAS AFFECTED WITH HEAVY SMOKE**

**OKALOOSA COUNTY** – Due to the prescribed burns on Eglin Air Force Base and weather forecasts, the Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) wants residents and visitors to take caution when being in areas affected heavily by smoke. Smoke can cause individuals to experience scratchy throats or irritated eyes and noses. Smoke can also worsen asthma and other chronic lung or heart conditions.

“Residents in the area of Mary Esther and Fort Walton Beach can expect periodic heavy smoke generating from occasional flare-ups from a prescribed burn in wetland areas on Eglin. The burn was successfully conducted and contained on June 7th. Weather forecasts had predicted significant rain in the days following the prescribed burn, however, those rains never materialized,” stated Eglin Air Force Base in a media advisory released on June 18<sup>th</sup>. “The Air Force Wildland Fire Center is monitoring the area and the smoke daily, and has been using their helicopter to apply water onto hot spots that continue to burn and produce smoke. Fire professionals expect smoke to continue to persist until the area receives enough rain to extinguish the fires. Residents with respiratory issues should take caution and appropriate measures to stay inside or avoid the area if possible.”

How to protect your family from smoke:

- Avoid prolonged outdoor activities in areas heavily affected by smoke. This is especially important for children and persons with pre-existing medical conditions.
- Stay indoors and run your air conditioner. Keep the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent bringing additional smoke inside. For best results, run the air conditioning with recirculated air.
- Help keep particle levels lower inside. When smoke levels are high, try to avoid using anything that burns, such as wood fireplaces, gas logs, gas stoves and candles. Do not vacuum, which stirs up particles already inside your home. Do not smoke.
- Follow your doctor’s advice about taking medicines and following your asthma management plan if you have asthma or other lung disease. Call your doctor if your symptoms worsen.
- Pay attention to local air quality reports, news coverage or health warnings related to smoke.

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health, please visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/>.

###

**Florida Department of Health**  
in OKALOOSA COUNTY  
221 Hospital Dr. NE, Ft Walton Beach, FL 32548  
PHONE: 850/833-9240 • FAX 850/833-9252  
[www.healthyokaloosa.com](http://www.healthyokaloosa.com)

**www.FloridaHealth.gov**  
TWITTER: HealthyFLA  
FACEBOOK: FLDepartmentofHealth  
YOUTUBE: fldoh  
FLICKR: HealthyFla  
PINTEREST: HealthyFla