

April 13, 2011

News Release

For Immediate Release

Air Quality Alert Today Due to Prescribed Burns

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department Air Quality Control division has revised the Air Quality Index (AQI) for April 13, 2011 will range from 'Moderate' to 'Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups'. Smoke from two large prescribed burns in the Mark Twain National Forest in southern Missouri could enter the Springfield area this afternoon. The particulate matter present in the smoke can cause 'unhealthy' air quality levels that could impact the Springfield area.

Particulate matter may contain fine particles that contain microscopic solids or liquid droplets that can become embedded into the lungs and cause serious health problems. Multiple scientific studies have linked particle pollution exposure to a variety of problems, including:

- Increased respiratory symptoms such as irritated airways, coughing or difficulty breathing
- Decreased lung function
- Aggravated asthma
- Development of chronic bronchitis
- Irregular heartbeat
- Nonfatal heart attacks
- Premature death in people with heart or lung disease

If particulate matter continues to travel into the Springfield area, air quality levels could be elevated to the 'Slightly Unhealthy' or orange level. 'Slightly Unhealthy' levels of air quality could be potentially harmful for people with heart or lung disease, older adults and children. People that fall into these categories should avoid prolonged exposure or heavy exertion when air quality levels are elevated to 'Slightly Unhealthy' or orange levels.

The division of Air Quality Control will continue to monitor this situation and provide detailed updates on the quality of the air in the Springfield area. For more information, visit the website at www.springfieldmo.gov/health/air.html or call Brian Adams at 417-864-1412.

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