

Managing smoke from prescribed fire at GGNRA



What to expect:

Prescribed fire is a resource management tool that is only used under appropriate weather conditions.

Any use of prescribed fire must be approved by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

This approval is granted the afternoon before a burn based on a 24-hour weather forecast to ensure conditions will allow good smoke dispersion.

A prescribed fire is designed to limit how much smoke is generated. Smoke from a prescribed fire will have short term impacts, but will not violate air quality standards under the prescribed weather conditions.

Smoke will be seen and smelled from a distance while burning is in progress. Caution should be used when hiking or driving if visibility is limited by smoke.

Smoke sensitive individuals, especially those with respiratory conditions such as asthma, should avoid the project area the day of the burn.

Burning vegetation emits very fine particulate matter that can be harmful to human health in large concentrations for extended periods of time. Prescribed fires at Golden Gate National Recreation Area are kept small and limited to one day to prevent harmful smoke impacts.

The following information is taken from “Wildfire smoke: A guide for public health officials” posted with other smoke related information on the California Air Resources Board website at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/smp/calfires/calfires.htm>:

Advisories for smoke sensitive individuals:

- People with heart or lung disease, the elderly, children, pregnant women and anyone especially sensitive to smoke should limit prolonged or heavy exertion if smoke is present.
- Limit time spent outdoors.
- Avoid physical exertion.
- People with heart or lung disease should pay attention to symptoms.
- People with asthma should follow their asthma management plan.
- Contact your health care provider if you have symptoms of lung or heart disease that may be related to excess smoke exposure, including repeated coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, nausea, unusual fatigue or lightheadedness.

To reduce exposure and avoid aggravating existing respiratory conditions:

- Stay indoors. Keep doors and windows closed, seal large gaps as much as possible.
- Avoid using exhaust fans (kitchen, bathrooms, clothes dryer, and utility room).
- Keep the garage-to-home door closed.
- If cooling is needed, turn air conditioning to re-circulate mode in home and car, or use ceiling fans or portable fans (but do not use whole house fans that suck outdoor air into the home).
- Avoid indoor sources of pollutants, including tobacco smoke, heating with wood stoves and kerosene heaters, frying or broiling foods, burning candles, vacuuming, and using paints, solvents, cleaning products, and adhesives.
- If you are being treated for respiratory conditions, have a supply of medication available.