

6 STEPS TO ENSURE CLEAN INDOOR AIR DURING WILDFIRE SMOKE

~ for central air systems ~

Wildfire season in Montana is becoming longer and more severe. Wildfire smoke is now a regular part of summer and early fall. For many individuals, including the elderly, children, and people with pre-existing heart or lung conditions, summer smoke can mean severe health impacts. **If you have a central heating and/or cooling system**, follow these 6 steps to ensure that your home or business has clean air during wildfire smoke events.

1. KNOW YOUR SYSTEM

It is important to know where your system's filters are located, whether you can blow unheated air (if you do not have AC), and how much airflow resistance your system can handle. *Some older systems may struggle with the added airflow resistance of better filters. Speak with an HVAC technician for assistance.*

2. UPGRADE YOUR FILTERS

Determine the size of filters you need. Purchase filters with a minimum efficiency reporting value (MERV) rating of 13 or higher. The higher the MERV rating, the more effective the filter will be at removing small particles. *MERV 8+ filters can be useful in cleaning some smoke out of the air when systems are run on recirculate and the filters are replaced frequently.*

3. CLOSE WINDOWS AND DOORS

Keep doors and windows shut as much as possible to prevent smoke infiltration and allow your filters to effectively clean the indoor air.

4. RECIRCULATE YOUR AIR

Run your system on recirculate when air quality outside is unhealthy. There may be a switch, or you may have to manually close the vents that bring in outside air. Recirculating indoor air will allow your filters to capture most of the smoke. *Be sure to have working carbon monoxide detectors in your home - turn recirculate off if these levels become high or the detector goes off.*

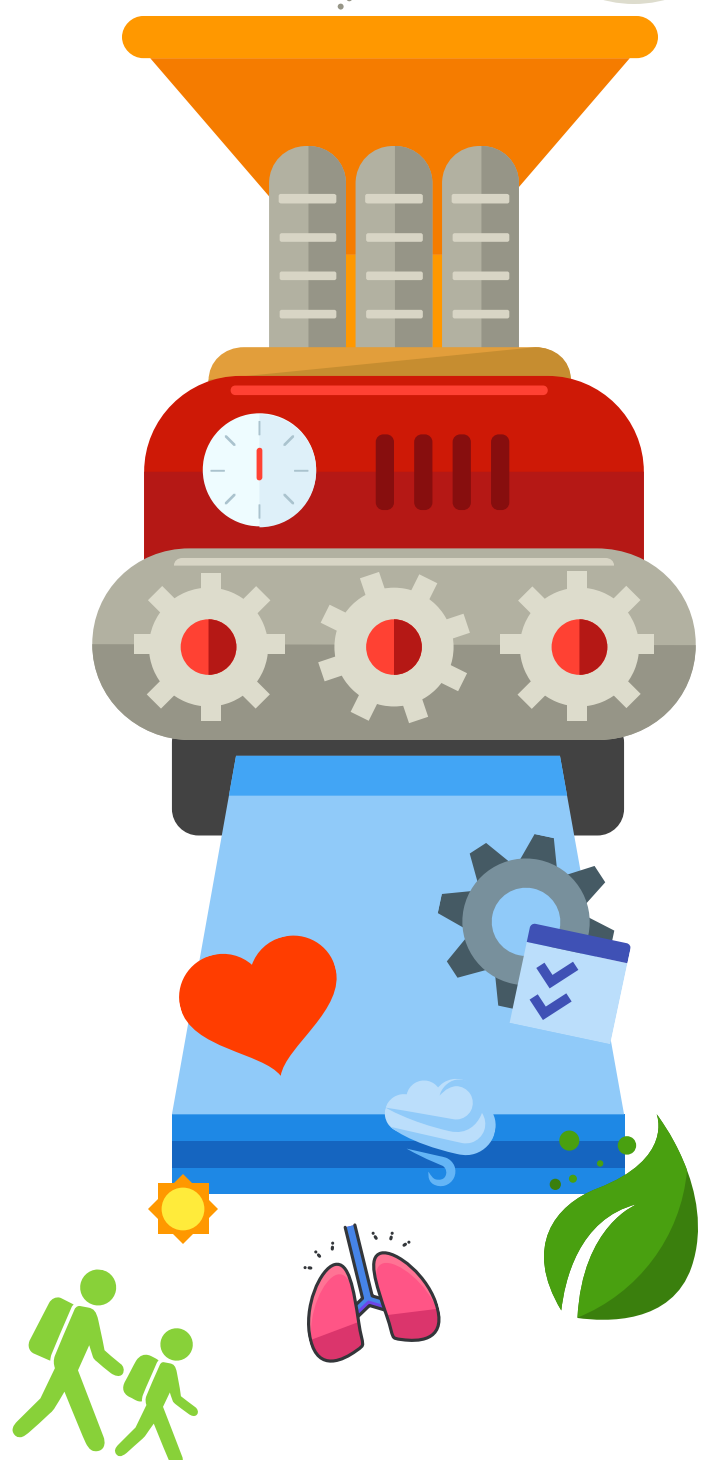
5. CHANGE FILTERS FREQUENTLY

During periods of heavy smoke, filters get dirty fast. In order to reduce strain on your system, check and change out your filters frequently.

6. ENJOY CLEANER AIR

Now you have clean indoor air! Spend as much time as possible in clean indoor spaces while the smoke persists.

Once the smoke is gone, take out the MERV13+ filters - a MERV 8 will save energy and work great for the non-smoky seasons.



If you don't have a central air system - and many of us don't - we recommend purchasing one or more [HEPA air purifiers](#). Learn more about air filtration possibilities and health impacts of wildfire smoke at [montanawildfiresmoke.org](#)