

Wildfire Season Readiness Checklist

Before the smoke arrives. For homes across Pasadena, Altadena and the San Gabriel Valley.

KNOW YOUR SYSTEM

- ☐ **Write down your filter size and photograph your equipment's model label.**
The size is printed on the filter's edge, and a technician needs the model number to say what your blower can handle.
- ☐ **Ask an HVAC professional the highest MERV rating your system can take.**
MERV is a filter efficiency score; 13 is the usual smoke target, but a thin slot or small blower may allow less, and only a check of the system tells you.
- ☐ **Buy spare filters now, for your system and for any portable air cleaner you own.**
Smoky air loads filters faster, and buying early means you are not shopping when everyone else is.
- ☐ **Find out whether your system pulls in outdoor air, and where that control is.**
Some systems have a fresh-air intake that can be closed; many older homes have none, and either way it is better to know now.
- ☐ **Locate the fan "On" setting on your thermostat.**
Running the fan continuously pulls the whole house's air through the filter, so know where the switch is before you need it.

SERVICE, SEAL AND INSPECT

- ☐ **Book a pre-season HVAC check.**
A technician can check airflow, the blower and filter fit on a calm day, and make sure the cooling side is ready for warm afternoons with the windows shut.
- ☐ **Have your ducts checked for leaks, especially runs through the attic or crawlspace.**
A typical home loses 20 to 30 percent of its duct air to leaks, and the fix is mastic or metal tape, never duct tape.
- ☐ **Check that your filter sits snug in its slot with no gaps around the edges.**
Air takes the easy path around a loose filter instead of through it; never bend or crush a filter to fit.

AIR CLEANERS, ALERTS AND SUPPLIES

- ☐ **Pick your cleaner-air room now and measure it.**
Choose a room with few windows and doors and no fireplace, such as a bedroom with an attached bathroom, and multiply length by width to get square feet.
- ☐ **Buy a HEPA portable air cleaner with a smoke CADR of at least two-thirds of that room's square footage.**
HEPA is the filter grade for fine particles and CADR the rated volume of cleaned air per minute, so a 120 square foot room needs 80 or more; pick a model certified by the California Air Resources Board and skip anything that makes ozone.
- ☐ **Download the South Coast AQMD app, sign up at AirAlerts.org and bookmark the AirNow Fire and Smoke Map.**
Alerts only help if they are set up in advance, and the app can notify you at an air quality level you choose.
- ☐ **Stock NIOSH-approved N95 respirators, several days of food and medication, and supplies for pets.**
Choose foods that need little or no cooking so nobody has to shop, or run the stove, on a smoky day.
- ☐ **Write a one-page bad-air-day plan and look up your nearest Clean Air Center on the California Air Resources Board's map.**
Decide who sets up the cleaner-air room, who swaps the filter and how you will stay cool with the windows shut, and ask a doctor what belongs in the plan if anyone in the house has asthma or a heart or lung condition.