



Montana High School Association

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TO: MHSA SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS AND ACTIVITES DIRECTORS MOA REGIONAL DIRECTORS

FROM: MARK BECKMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: IMPACT OF AIR QUALITY ON HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

With fall sports practices and golf meets underway and competition ready to begin in football, volleyball, soccer and cross country, there are a few areas throughout our state that are experiencing poor air quality because of smoke from wildfires in Montana and surrounding states. As we proceed through the beginning of the fall season, there may be more areas affected by smoke from wildfires. Please see the memo below regarding the impact of air quality on high school activities.

It is important to note that the Montana Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) have revised their recommendations for Outdoor Activities Based on Air Quality for Schools and those revised recommendations are attached.

If you have any questions regarding Air Quality, please contact me or Brian Michelotti.

Thank you.

IMPACT OF AIR QUALITY ON HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Because of the concerns about smoke problems as related to high school athletic practices/contests for the fall season in Montana, the following interpretations are provided:

- The number of required practices for each of the fall sports (golf, volleyball, cross country, football and soccer) **cannot be waived**. The legal ramifications of a waiver, which would occur because of the safety/health purposes of the practice rules, would be prohibitive.
- Any postponements, rescheduling or cancellations of contests must be arranged by the schools involved within the established dates for the season. There is no rule that would prohibit two football games in a week.
- The seasons cannot be lengthened because of the overlapping problems with the winter sports if fall sports were extended in any manner.
- Some districts and/or divisions might have to revisit their seeding formulas for post season play because of schools not playing the same number of games because of the fire/smoke situations throughout the state. Realizing that many areas have different policies about practices because of

poor air quality, each school district has the autonomy to determine what is safe for the students involved in any particular sports' preparation.

Resources:

- Attached are the **revised** guidelines for your use in making recommendations for outdoor events during wildfire season.
- For more information, visit Montana's website for the Department of Environmental Quality at www.deq.mt.gov or <http://todaysair.mt.gov>.
- Also, please contact your local health department for further information/guidance regarding air quality in your specific area regarding practices and contests.

If there are questions concerning decisions that must be made, schools can contact the MHSA office by phone (442-6010) or e-mail (mbeckman@mhsa.org) or (bmichelotti@mhsa.org).