Wildfire Smoke & Air Quality Procedure

PODS Enterprises, LLC

Applies To: **All PODS field operations and employees performing outdoor work.**

Document Owner:	**Effective Date:**
Environment, Health & Safety (EHS)	**8/15/2026**

1. Purpose
    a. The purpose of this procedure is to protect PODS employees from potential health hazards associated with wildfire smoke and poor outdoor air quality while maintaining safe and effective business operations.
    b. This procedure establishes minimum requirements for monitoring air quality, implementing exposure controls, modifying work practices, and determining when outdoor work should be limited or suspended.
    c. PODS recognizes that most field employees spend the majority of their workday inside enclosed commercial truck cabs equipped with heating and air conditioning systems. As a result, employee exposure to wildfire smoke is generally intermittent rather than continuous. This procedure is designed to minimize cumulative smoke exposure while supporting essential operations.
2. Scope
    a. This procedure applies to all PODS employees whose job duties require outdoor work, including but not limited to:
        i. Drivers
        ii. Driver/Operators
        iii. Service Center Associates
        iv. Yard Personnel
        v. Transportation Personnel
        vi. Operations Leadership
        vii. Contractors performing work on behalf of PODS, where applicable
3. Responsibilities
    a. **Environment, Health & Safety (EHS)**
        EHS is responsible for:
        i. Maintaining this procedure.
        ii. Providing guidance during wildfire smoke events.
        iii. Supporting Operations with risk assessments when necessary.
        iv. Monitoring significant regional wildfire events that may impact operations.
    b. **Regional Vice Presidents**
        Regional Vice Presidents are responsible for:
        i. Approving essential outdoor operations when AQI exceeds 220.
        ii. Supporting operational decisions during significant smoke events.
        iii. Ensuring adequate resources are available to protect employees.
    c. **Operations Leadership**
        Operations Leaders and Supervisors are responsible for:
        i. Monitoring local Air Quality Index (AQI).
        ii. Implementing the requirements contained in this procedure.
        iii. Planning work to minimize outdoor exposure.
        iv. Ensuring employees understand smoke-related hazards.
        v. Suspending work when conditions become unsafe.
    d. **Employees**
        Employees are responsible for:
        i. Following supervisor direction.

ii. Reporting symptoms immediately.
iii. Utilizing exposure controls provided by PODS.
iv. Reporting changing smoke conditions observed in the field.

4. Air Quality Monitoring
    a. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Air Quality Index (AQI) shall be used to evaluate outdoor air quality.
    b. Operations should monitor AQI using:
        i. AirNow.gov
        ii. EPA AirNow Mobile App
        iii. Local weather services approved by management
    c. AQI should be checked:
        i. Before the beginning of each shift
        ii. Whenever wildfire smoke becomes visible
        iii. Following local emergency notifications
        iv. At least every two hours whenever AQI exceeds 150
    d. When work spans multiple locations, supervisors should use the highest AQI affecting the work area.
5. Operational Requirements

AQI	Air Quality	Operational Requirements
0–100	Good / Moderate	Normal operations. No additional controls required.
101–150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Continue normal operations. Notify employees of current AQI. Employees with asthma, COPD, heart disease, pregnancy, or other medical conditions may request alternate duties where practical.
151–219	Unhealthy	Continue essential operations while minimizing outdoor exposure. Supervisors should plan work to limit continuous outdoor exposure to approximately 10 minutes at a time, followed by a recovery period of approximately 10 minutes inside an enclosed truck cab or climate-controlled building whenever operationally feasible. Operate vehicle HVAC systems in Recirculate mode during recovery periods. Delay non-essential outdoor activities where practical. Voluntary N95 respirators shall be made available.
220–300	Very Unhealthy	Suspend non-essential outdoor work. Essential operations require Regional Vice President approval. Outdoor work should be limited to only the time necessary to complete the task safely. Employees should recover inside an enclosed truck cab or building for approximately 10 minutes following each 10 minutes of outdoor work, whenever operationally feasible. Supervisors should evaluate delaying deliveries or rescheduling work until conditions improve.
301+	Hazardous	Suspend routine outdoor operations. Only emergency or life-safety work may proceed with Regional Vice President approval following a documented risk assessment. Operations should resume once AQI improves or additional protective controls are implemented.

6. Exposure Reduction Measures
    a. Whenever AQI exceeds 150, supervisors should implement as many of the following controls as practical.
    b. **Engineering Controls**
        i. Operate truck HVAC systems in **Recirculate** mode whenever practical.
        ii. Keep vehicle windows and doors closed while driving.
        iii. Utilize enclosed buildings or service centers during breaks.
        iv. Reduce unnecessary time outside of the vehicle.

c. **Administrative Controls**
    i. Plan work to minimize repeated trips outside the vehicle.
    ii. Complete paperwork and customer documentation inside the truck cab whenever practical.
    iii. Combine multiple outdoor tasks into one work period.
    iv. Utilize approximately **10-minute outdoor work periods followed by 10-minute recovery periods** whenever operationally feasible.
    v. Delay non-essential work until AQI improves.
    vi. Rotate employees when extended outdoor exposure cannot be avoided.
    vii. Increase hydration opportunities.
    viii. Encourage employees to report symptoms early.

7. Work Planning During Smoke Events
    a. When AQI exceeds 150, supervisors should evaluate opportunities to reduce employee exposure by:
        i. Completing indoor tasks before outdoor work.
        ii. Combining container deliveries or relocations into one visit where practical.
        iii. Delaying non-essential deliveries or container moves.
        iv. Reducing time spent outside of the truck.
        v. Scheduling work during periods when local AQI is forecasted to improve.
        vi. Utilizing alternate personnel or facilities when practical.
    b. Operational decisions should balance employee health, customer commitments, weather conditions, and business continuity.
8. Respiratory Protection
    a. PODS may make N95 filtering facepiece respirators available for **voluntary use** during wildfire smoke events.
    b. Voluntary respirator use shall comply with OSHA requirements.
9. Employee Symptoms
    a. Employees shall immediately notify their supervisor if they experience symptoms including:
        i. Difficulty breathing
        ii. Chest pain
        iii. Wheezing
        iv. Persistent coughing
        v. Dizziness
        vi. Confusion
        vii. Severe headache
        viii. Unusual fatigue
    b. Employees exhibiting significant symptoms shall stop work immediately and seek medical evaluation as appropriate.
10. Stop Work Authority
    a. Supervisors are authorized to temporarily suspend outdoor operations whenever air quality presents an unacceptable risk to employee health, regardless of the reported AQI.
    b. Examples include:
        i. Heavy visible wildfire smoke
        ii. Rapidly deteriorating air quality
        iii. Significantly reduced visibility due to smoke
        iv. Local emergency declarations
        v. Nearby active wildfires

vi. Employees exhibiting smoke-related symptoms

c. Whenever operational disruptions are anticipated due to sustained AQI exceeding 200, supervisors shall notify their **Regional Vice President** as soon as practical.

11. Training
    a. Operations leaders and affected employees shall receive awareness training on this procedure, including:
        i. Understanding AQI categories
        ii. Recognizing symptoms of smoke exposure
        iii. Proper use of exposure reduction measures
        iv. Voluntary use of N95 respirators
        v. Stop work authority and reporting expectations
    b. Training shall be provided:
        i. Upon initial assignment to affected positions
        ii. Whenever this procedure is significantly revised
        iii. As needed during prolonged wildfire smoke events
12. References
    a. OSHA – Wildfire Smoke Guidance
    b. NIOSH – Wildland Fire Smoke Resources
    c. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Air Quality Index (AQI)
    d. AirNow.gov

Revision History

Date	Section	Change	Author