

MEDIA RELEASE

DUST ADVISORY CONTINUED FOR QUESNEL

March 24, 2011 – Quesnel The Ministry of Environment in collaboration with Northern Health has continued the Dust Advisory for Quesnel because of high concentrations of dust that are expected to persist at least until tomorrow.

Avoid strenuous outdoor activities. Staying indoors with windows and doors closed helps to reduce exposure.

Exposure is particularly a concern for infants, the elderly and those who have underlying medical conditions such as breathing or lung conditions, hay fever, asthma or persons who react strongly to dust. If you are experiencing symptoms such as continuing eye or throat irritation, chest discomfort, shortness of breath, cough or wheeze, follow the advice of your health care provider.

For more information on current air quality, see: www.bcairquality.ca.

Tips to reduce your personal health risk:

- Avoid roads with heavy vehicle traffic.
- If you stay indoors, keep windows and doors closed and reduce indoor sources of pollution, such as smoking, vacuuming and use of wood stoves.
- Continue to control medical conditions such as asthma, hay fever and chronic respiratory disease. If symptoms continue to be bothersome, seek medical attention.
- Maintaining good overall health is a good way to prevent health effects resulting from short-term exposure to air pollution.

Additional Information:

- This advisory has been triggered by high concentrations of dust, measured as “PM₁₀” - particles 10 micrometres or smaller in diameter.
- Dust particulate (PM₁₀) concentrations are measured as micrograms of particulate per cubic metre of air ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$).
- Current readings (8:00AM PDT) in downtown Quesnel are $41\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (1-hour average) and $71\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (24-hour average).

- The 24-hour average concentration exceeds the provincial air quality objective of $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.
- The current dusty conditions are caused by road traffic stirring up winter traction materials that have accumulated on roadways over the past winter.
- This episode is expected to continue until there is a change in weather patterns.
- Real-time concentrations of PM_{10} in Quesnel and other communities in B.C. are available at www.bcairquality.ca.
- More information on air quality and your health can be found on Northern Health's website at: www.northernhealth.ca . Click on the Your Health tab at the top of the page, then follow the various links under Health Alerts, Health Topics and Environmental Health.

Contact: Graham Veale, Air Quality Meteorologist, Ministry of Environment
Phone: 250-398-4762

Contact: Dr. William Osei, Medical Health Officer, Northern Health
Phone: 250-565-7461