

Wilbur Ellis Facility Fire

Sulfur Dioxide Detected Through Air Monitoring

Grant County, WA – The Grant County Health District (GCHD) is extending the following health advisory for residents downwind (downwind locations may vary with shifting wind conditions) from the Wilbur-Ellis facility fire, located at Road 1.3 and Road O SE, Moses Lake.

As of October 27th, 2022, debris at the site of the Wilbur Ellis fire continues to smolder and emit smoke and gases. Particulate matter (similar to what can be generated during wildfire smoke) and noxious gases are traveling in smoke plumes with the wind. Particulate matter is very small, microscopic particles that can be inhaled and may cause health concerns. Seven monitoring locations around the site set up by the Washington Department of Ecology and the US Environmental Protection Agency are reporting a general downward trend in particulate concentrations east of the site.

Follow this link to view GCHD'S air quality index table: https://granthealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Air.Quality.Index_.English.2017.pdf

Sulfur dioxide (SO₂) has also been detected through air monitoring tests. SO₂ is a colorless gas with a characteristic, irritating, pungent odor. SO₂ is a known byproduct of thermal decomposition of fertilizer products including those present at the site. Exposure to SO₂ may cause irritations to the eyes, nose, throat and airways. SO₂ symptoms may include nasal congestion, eye irritation, burning or tearing, choking, cough, airway irritation such as wheezing, burning or shortness of breath. If you are experiencing symptoms or are concerned about exposure, please contact your healthcare provider.

The public is asked to stay away from the immediate site and avoid any areas where you can see or smell smoke. If you must be in an area where smoke is visible, a well fitted KN95 mask will help protect you from particulate matter. However, these masks do not protect you from gases which includes SO₂.

Follow the Grant County Health District Facebook page as we continue to provide updates on our advisory and information from our partners.

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