

Appendix 4-Air quality self-assessment guide

Visual assessments are based on the USEPA visual range and actions to take to reduce smoke exposure during smoky conditions. They may be useful in deciding what to do when local air is smoky and air quality monitoring information is not available.

This procedure provides good estimates of visibility only when:

- It is daylight hours (avoid sunset and sunrise)
- The relative humidity is less than 65% because moisture in the air (fog or rain) reduces visibility
- Focusing on dark objects (black is better than green).

Follow this procedure:

1. When there is no smoke (or fire) in the landscape, identify landmarks that are visible from home. Look for dark landmarks (such as buildings, sheds or large trees) that are at distances of 1.5, 2, 5, 10 kilometres.
2. Each of these distances corresponds to an Air Quality Category in the following table.
3. Use the landmarks as a guide to estimate air quality in the area when smoke is present.
4. When the landmark can no longer be clearly seen, air quality has deteriorated. Visibility is the distance to the nearest landmark that is just obscured (hard to see clearly) due to smoky conditions.

Air Quality Category	Landmark visible from home	Cautionary health advice/actions
Good	>20km	None - it is a good day to be outside
Moderate	>10 km and <20 km	None - it is okay to be outside but watch for changes in air quality
Smoke impacts on air quality		
Poor	>5 km and <10 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are sensitive to air pollution (www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/monitoring-your-environment/about-epa-airwatch/air-pollution-sensitivity) could have symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath <p>What you can do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are coughing or have shortness of breath, avoid being outside in the smoke or dust • If you are sensitive to air pollution (www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/monitoring-your-environment/about-epa-airwatch/air-pollution-sensitivity), spend less time outside in the smoke or dust and follow your treatment plan • Close your windows and doors to keep smoke and dust out of your home • If you are worried about your symptoms, see your doctor or call Nurse on Call on 1300 606 024 • Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance <p>www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/environmental-information/air-quality/smoke</p>

Air Quality Category	Landmark visible from home	Cautionary health advice/actions
Very Poor	>1.5 km and < 5 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people might have symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath <p>What you can do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to your local emergency radio station or visit Emergency Vic for advice • Avoid being outside in the smoke or dust • Close your windows and doors to keep smoke and dust out of your home • If you think the air in your home is uncomfortable, consider going to an air-conditioned building like a library or shopping centre for a break if it's safe to do so • If you are sensitive to air pollution (www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/monitoring-your-environment/about-epa-airwatch/air-pollution-sensitivity), follow your treatment plan • If you are worried about your symptoms, see your doctor or call Nurse on Call on 1300 606 024 • Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance <p>www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/environmental-information/air-quality/smoke</p>
Hazardous	1.5km or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone might have symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath <p>What you can do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to your local emergency radio station or visit Emergency Vic for advice • Stay indoors away from smoke and dust • Close your windows and doors to keep smoke and dust out of your home • If you think the air in your home is uncomfortable, consider going to an air-conditioned building like a library or shopping centre for a break if it's safe to do so. • If you have asthma you should follow your asthma action plan • If you have a heart or lung condition, follow your treatment plan • If you are worried about your symptoms, see your doctor or call Nurse on Call on 1300 606 024 • Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance <p>The air quality where you are might not be the same as the air quality at this site.</p> <p>www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/environmental-information/air-quality/smoke</p>