



Foothill-De Anza Community College District

**Air Quality Monitoring Plan**

**Introduction**

As climate change continues to affect California, in particular causing droughts and extreme heat events that contribute to large, sustained wildfire situations each year, it has become crucial for the Foothill-De Anza Community College District (“the District”) to develop a standard, consistent approach for dealing with air quality issues that develop as a result of these fires. The focus of this plan is to preserve the health and safety of our faculty, staff, students and community users while still supporting the instructional, student and administrative support services and community activities that are offered by the District.

As part of its standardization, the District recommends utilizing the government air quality monitoring website AirNow (<https://www.airnow.gov/>) as its primary source for determining current and future trends in air quality issues. The Air Quality Index (AQI) is divided into six basic air quality categories, which are further described below (see Table 1):

**Table 1**

*AQI Basics for Ozone and Particle Pollution*

| AQI Basics for Ozone and Particle Pollution |                                |                 |   |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Daily AQI Color                             | Levels of Concern              | Values of Index | Description of Air Quality  |
| Green                                       | Good                           | 0 to 50         | Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.   |
| Yellow                                      | Moderate                       | 51 to 100       | Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution. |
| Orange                                      | Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups | 101 to 150      | Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.                              |
| Red   | Unhealthy                      | 151 to 200      | Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects. |
| Purple                                      | Very Unhealthy                 | 201 to 300      | Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.   |
| Maroon                                      | Hazardous                      | 301 and higher  | Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.   |

*Note.* Adapted from “Home of the U.S. Air Quality Index,” by “Airnow.gov”. Retrieved from <https://www.airnow.gov/aqi/aqi-basics/>

As shown above, more significant health issues become prevalent as the Air Quality Index (AQI) exceeds 100. This plan will only address circumstances where the AQI is anticipated to not only start above 100, but also exceed 150 as the day progresses. Due to the three distinct physical locations (i.e., Los Altos Hills (Zip Code: 94022), Cupertino (Zip Code: 95014) and Sunnyvale (Zip Code: 94089), it is entirely possible that a campus or education center may be experiencing poor air quality, while other district locations are categorized as “Green = AQI between 0-50” per the Air Quality Index (AQI). The decision to restrict activities or close locations will be made based upon the AQI at each location, versus implementing a districtwide decision. However, the criteria to do so should be consistent amongst all physical locations.

In the event that the AirNow website (<https://www.airnow.gov/>) is down or experiencing technical difficulties, a secondary website titled Purple Air <https://www.purpleair.com/> will be utilized to monitor the air quality during the AirNow website outage period.

### **Standard Guidelines**

The District will utilize the following general standards in deciding limitations that should be implemented on a campus during an air quality event:

- AQI of 151-200 (Red): Any employee groups that work outside, such as Grounds staff, may be moved to indoor work environments if the AQI will be *sustained or increase throughout the workday*. Mitigating measures may be enacted, such as requesting employees to work from home where possible and minimizing on-site outdoor activities.
- AQI 201 and above (Purple/Maroon): Campus/educational center may be closed except where there are mitigating factors.

Some instructional, support or outside vendor areas may have slightly different plans depending upon the needs of the area. These areas include:

- Athletics (i.e., including the travel to other parts of the state that could be affected by poor AQI)
- Child Development Center (i.e., affecting De Anza College only)
- Construction Projects (i.e., affecting districtwide locations)
- Outside User Events (i.e., Facility Rentals pre-scheduled through the Facility Rentals office at each respective Campus)
- Preplanned Events

### **Decision-Making Process and Timeline**

When weather forecasts predict the likelihood of poor air quality events in the area, senior administration of the affected campus and/or campuses will meet/confer the previous day and determine what, if any, action needs to be taken. If it appears the AQI will exceed 150, then restrictions will be implemented as necessary to protect the health and safety of the district’s employees, students, and community users. If the response is limited, applicable supervisors

will be notified versus a large-scale message. If the response is broader, such as limiting access or closing locations, then the RAVE Alert system will be used to notify employees and students of any restrictions on campus. Such decisions will be reported directly to Chancellor's Cabinet as soon as possible.

There are unique instances where air quality may unexpectedly change due to nearby activities. In these cases, many of the same measures will apply. In the case of an "Red = AQI between 151-200" level event, the affected area's supervisor could make the immediate decision of how to manage the on-site staff. However, if it is a large-scale event, then Senior Administration may need to make a campus-wide decision about what activities should and/or could continue to take place on site.