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Smoke from Central Oregon Wildfires May Impact Willamette Valley Over the Weekend

The holiday weekend may be a smoky one for Willamette Valley residents. Current weather models are predicting east winds will transport smoke from several fires burning in Central Oregon into the Willamette Valley. The smoke may arrive as early as Saturday morning and the haze from the fires could persist over the weekend. A switch to onshore flow by late Sunday or early Monday should clear the smoke from the valley.

Smoke that reaches lower elevations could push air quality into the unhealthy range on Saturday and Sunday morning. "If the wildfire smoke reaches ground level, residents with asthma, lung, or heart disease may experience discomfort," said Sally Markos, spokesperson for the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA). "Older adults and children are most vulnerable and should avoid prolonged outdoor exercise or exertion," says Markos. Fine smoke particles are especially harmful because they are inhaled deep into the lungs and can enter the bloodstream. If air quality reaches unhealthy levels, the general population may also experience some adverse effects. Residents experiencing health problems associated with the smoke are encouraged to consult with their doctors.

LRAPA will be monitoring the situation over the weekend. The public can track hourly particulate levels and the Air Quality Index by logging onto the LRAPA website at www.LRAPA.org.

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