DHEC cautions residents about wildfire smoke

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DHEC has issued an air quality alert for Tuesday for the Upstate, Midlands, Central Savannah River area, Pee Dee and Catawba regions. Smoke from the wildfires may create unhealthy conditions which can aggravate respiratory ailments as well as chronic lung and heart conditions.

State health officials on Monday cautioned residents about the potential effects of wildfire smoke enveloping the Upstate.

Air quality monitors are detecting elevated levels of particulate matter in several regions, particularly in the Upstate counties, according to the state Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Areas north of I-20 and west of I-77 are at risk, officials said, adding that the conditions may linger for the next several days.

"Smoke from these fires can irritate the eyes and respiratory system, as well as aggravate or exacerbate chronic heart and lung diseases," said to Rhonda Thompson, chief of DHEC's Bureau of Air Quality.

People with respiratory health issues are advised to limit their time outdoors to avoid the smoke and to take measures to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside, according to DHEC. Keep windows and doors closed and keep fresh-air intakes closed and filters clean in air conditioning and central heating units to prevent smoke from getting inside, officials said.

To learn more, go to www.state.sc.us/forest, https://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=topics.smoke_wildfires and http://www.scdhec.gov/HomeAndEnvironment/DisasterPreparedness/Wildfires/.



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The fire at Pinnacle Mountain continues to spew smoke as firefighters work controled burns.