

January 29, 2010

Air quality advisory issued for Edmonton area (48 hours)

EDMONTON – Winter-time smog conditions are resulting in poor air quality in Edmonton and surrounding communities. This is expected to last throughout the weekend.

The deterioration of air quality in the area can be attributed to a build-up of pollutants during light wind conditions, as well as the changing temperatures, which traps the pollutants. Fine particulate matter can be absorbed deep into an individual's lungs where it can cause health problems, particularly for individuals with respiratory conditions.

“The quality of air at present is not a health hazard for those in good health. However, people with asthma, bronchitis or emphysema should monitor their reactions and take any preventative measures their physicians have previously recommended,” advises Dr. Gerry Predy, Senior Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Health Services. “People who experience difficulty breathing should consult their physicians.”

Dr. Predy also recommends individuals with respiratory conditions remain indoors, keep their windows closed and limit outdoor physical activity.

In co-operation with Alberta Environment, Alberta Health Services will continue to monitor the air quality in the Edmonton area. The air quality index (AQI) rating can fluctuate over time.

Current air quality and the AQI can be accessed at Alberta Environment's website at www.envinfo.gov.ab.ca/AirQuality, click on Current Air Quality.

Residents can contact Health Link Alberta to speak to a registered nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 780-408-LINK (5465) or, outside the local calling area, toll-free 1-866-408-LINK.

Please note that this advisory is in effect for 48 hours.

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For media inquiries, please contact:

Holly Regel
Communications
Phone: 780-342-8630
Pager: 780-906-5224