



Media release

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Monitor smoke this summer and assist those with respiratory disorders

With the risk of bushfires across the state increasing as the weather finally heats up, the Asthma Foundation of Tasmania (AFT) is warning people with asthma and other respiratory disorders to be prepared.

AFT CEO Cathy Beswick said with the current risk of bushfires, people with asthma and other respiratory disorders may be at risk and should ensure they have an up-to-date Written Asthma Action Plan.

“Bushfire smoke releases tiny particles into the air both inside and out, which are known causes of respiratory problems,” Mrs Beswick said.

“These particles are so minute that they can lodge within the respiratory system and remain there for life.

“As well as the risk of smoke from bushfires, the start of autumn will soon be upon us, bringing with it the burn-off season.

“If visibility is reduced by smoke, people with respiratory disorders will be at risk as smoke is one of the main triggers of asthma symptoms.”

Mrs Beswick said anyone burning-off, whether they be organisations or individuals, should ensure they are familiar with the smoke management legislation regulating burn-offs.

“The Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality) 1994 states public and private landowners must ‘efficiently and effectively’ monitor their burn-offs,” she said.

“We would like to see all individuals and organisations adhering to this legislation and those who do not, to be subject to stringent review.

“The AFT’s aim is to ensure all burn-offs, whether carried out by organisations or individuals, are conducted and controlled in line with evidence based practice and state-of-the art monitoring.

“Should the Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality) 1994 legislation be breached, we would like to see these breaches investigated.

asthma

FOUNDATION OF TASMANIA

“After all, this is the law and all we are asking is that it be properly adhered too.”

During periods of high intensity smoke, such as that associated with a bushfire, the AFT recommends people with asthma and other respiratory illnesses:

- Always carry their blue reliever puffer
- Stay indoors and keep windows and doors closed
- Minimise the amount of physical outdoor activity
- If using an air conditioner or heat pump at home or in the car, set it to ‘recycle’.
- Try to minimise exposure to other irritants such as cigarette smoke and dust
- Prepare an up-to-date action plan ahead of time to avoid unnecessary exposure to smoke and to be able to respond quickly to any clinical deterioration.

The AFT is charged with the responsibility of ensuring the respiratory health of all Tasmanians.

For more information, please contact the Asthma Foundation of Tasmania on 1800 645 130.

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