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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ST. JOHNS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
WARNS OF RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH WILDFIRE SMOKE**

ST. AUGUSTINE - The St. Johns County Health Department and the Florida Department of Health (DOH) caution citizens that wildfire smoke is a respiratory irritant that can cause scratchy throat or irritated eyes and nose. Smoke can also worsen conditions such as asthma and other chronic respiratory or lung conditions.

How to Protect your Family from Smoke:

- Pay attention to local air quality reports, news coverage or health warnings related to smoke.
- Use common sense when outside conditions are smoky. Avoid prolonged outdoor activities. It is especially important to limit time spent outdoors for children and persons with existing medical conditions.
- Stay indoors and run your air conditioner, if you have one. Keep the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent bringing additional smoke inside. For best results, run the air conditioning with re-circulated air.

Note: If you do not have an air conditioner, staying inside with the windows closed may be dangerous in extremely hot weather. In these cases, seek alternative shelter.

- Help keep particle levels lower inside. When smoke levels are high, try to avoid using anything that burns, such as wood fireplaces, gas logs, gas stoves and even candles. Do not vacuum, which stirs up particles already inside your home.
- Also do not smoke tobacco.
- Follow your doctor's advice about taking medicines and following your asthma management plan if you have asthma or other lung disease. Call your doctor if your symptoms worsen.

For additional information, contact the St. Johns County Health Department at 904-825-5055, Ext. 1004.

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Our Mission: *Promote, protect and improve the health of all people in Florida.*

Our Vision: *A healthier future for the people of Florida.*

Our Values: *- Integrity; Commitment to Service; Respect; Excellence; Accountability; Teamwork; Empowerment –*



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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.