

Coolaroo fire Community information



Environment
Protection
Authority Victoria

Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) is supporting the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) to respond to a fire at SKM Recycling and Waste Management on Maffra St, Coolaroo, in Melbourne's north.

The fire is producing a large plume of smoke that is impacting on the local community. There is also a strong odour associated with the smoke.

EPA is providing MFB, the incident controller, and all relevant government agencies with air quality data from mobile monitoring stations

in the fire's immediate vicinity, as per emergency management protocols.

Data from these stations is updated regularly at the [EPA AirWatch](#) website and is expected to change throughout coming days.

EPA's mobile air quality monitoring equipment provides localised monitoring for small particles in the air, known as PM_{2.5}. These tiny particles are present in smoke and measure less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter (the average width of a strand of human hair is 75 micrometres in diameter). Because of

their small size, PM_{2.5} particles are the main pollutant of concern in smoke. Gases are also being monitored, but concentrations are very low.

EPA advises people that if they can smell smoke and are concerned, they should try to avoid the smoke by staying inside. Avoiding the area, if possible, is also recommended.

EPA officers at the site will also provide advice about capturing fire water used to extinguish the fire to minimise any impacts on local waterways.

Health information

Ash

- Ash particles fall from smoke. Ash is a fine powder that may be visible on surfaces.
- Although too large to breathe into your lungs, ash particles may irritate your eyes, nose or throat. These health effects should resolve quickly. If they don't, call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24 or seek medical advice.
- If you come into contact with ash, wash it off your hands, face and neck as needed. If ash gets in your eyes, gently wash out with clean water.
- Practice good hygiene. Wipe down surfaces with soap and water.
- Remove footwear before entering your home to avoid walking ash inside.

Rainwater tanks

- If you have a rainwater tank and the water from the tank tastes, looks or smells unusual, do not use it for drinking, bathing or for pets.
- The town water supply is safe to use for drinking and all domestic uses.

Smoke

- Smoke can affect people's health. Where possible, avoid exposure to the smoke.
- People with heart or lung conditions (including asthma), children, pregnant women and the elderly are more sensitive to the effects of breathing in smoke.
- People with existing heart or lung conditions (including asthma) should follow the treatment plan advised by their doctor.
- If you are experiencing any symptoms that may be due to smoke exposure, seek medical advice or call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24.
- Anyone experiencing wheezing, chest tightness and difficulty breathing should call 000.

Access to information and support

- Incident information and updates:
emergency.vic.gov.au
- Up-to-date air quality information:
epa.vic.gov.au/airwatch
- Information about the impacts of smoke:
epa.vic.gov.au/smoke
- If you are experiencing any symptoms that may be due to smoke exposure, seek medical advice or call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24.
- Call EPA 24-hours a day on 1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC)