

Suggestions for Implementing Recess Guidance for Schools Based on Air Quality

The Recess Guidance was developed to be used with the Department of Environmental Quality's Website. To check current PM_{2.5} levels, visit www.airquality.utah.gov and click on "current conditions" for PM_{2.5} for Cache, Salt Lake/Davis, Utah and Weber Counties.

At the beginning of the school year:

- Identify sensitive students**
 - » Parents, with the advice of their health care provider, should inform their school if they believe their child is part of a "sensitive" group.
 - » A sample letter is available at http://health.utah.gov/asthma/schools/aq_guidelines.html for parents explaining the issues with poor air quality, and the responsibility of parents and schools when air quality is poor.
- Schedule a faculty/staff meeting to discuss air quality.** The Utah Department of Health is available to come and present on air quality for faculty/staff and even parents. Call 801.538.6141 to request a presentation.
- Determine who will check the PM_{2.5} Levels.** This can be done at a district level or on a school to school basis depending on the needs of each school and district.
- Develop a plan for physical activity when children are kept indoors.** When the PM_{2.5} level is between 35.5 ug/m³ - 55.4 ug/m³, "sensitive" students should avoid outdoor physical activity, when the level is 55.5 ug/m³ - 90 ug/m³ "sensitive" students and those experiencing symptoms should be kept indoors. When levels are 90 ug/m³ all students should be kept indoors. See guidance for more information.
 - » Keeping all students indoors does not happen very often. For example, during the winter of 2006-07, there were only 4 days in Salt Lake and 2 days in Ogden when all students were kept indoors. Schools might opt to adapt protocols for inclement weather days for such occasions.
 - » The guidance should also be used for junior and high school students for PE and outdoor sports practice

What do during inversion season:

- Check current PM_{2.5} levels** visit www.airquality.utah.gov and click on "current conditions"
 - » It is suggested that the PM_{2.5} levels be checked at least once a day (November-March), like temperature air quality varies throughout the day.
- Send word to faculty/staff when and which students should stay indoors.**

Note - Schools are encouraged to use the Recess Guidance and an individual's sensitivity rather than the color air days to determine when students should be kept indoors. The guidance was developed from data collected, by the Utah Departments of Health and Environmental Quality over three years, on the impact of air quality on students' health. YELLOW and RED air days are a call for public action to reduce pollution.

For more information visit www.health.utah.gov/asthma.

Updated December 2009



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