

July 17, 2026

MEMORANDUM TO: Long-Term Care Home Licensees

FROM: Sandra Lawson
Assistant Deputy Minister
Long-Term Care Operations Division

SUBJECT: Air Quality and Wildfire Smoke in Ontario - Resources for Long-Term Care (LTC) Homes

This summer has brought periods of high heat and poor air quality to some communities across Ontario, and I want to thank you for your efforts to ensure the health, safety, and comfort of LTC residents during this time.

Adults over the age of 65 are vulnerable to poor air quality, particularly those with additional risk factors such as certain cardiovascular and respiratory conditions. The following information and resources are designed to help LTC residents, caregivers and their families navigate this extreme weather.

Quick Tips:

Where appropriate and feasible, LTC homes may wish to consider the following measures **during periods of poor air quality:**

- Monitor local air quality conditions and refer to guidance and alerts from local public health units, Environment and Climate Change Canada and others;
- Limit outdoor activities with residents, particularly for residents who may be at higher risk;
- Keep windows and exterior doors closed where feasible;
- Where appropriate, limit outdoor air intake through HVAC systems, while ensuring continued safe operation of building systems;
- Monitor residents for any changes in health status or symptoms that may be associated with poor air quality, and
- Support residents, families, caregivers, and staff who may have questions or concerns.

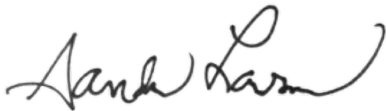
Resources:

- [Wildfires and Health Effects | Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Ontario - Air Quality Health Index \(AQHI\) | Environment and Climate Change Canada](#)

- [Ontario Forest Fire Info Map](#)
- [Forest fires | ontario.ca](#)
- [Canadian Wildland Fire Information System | Natural Resources Canada](#)
- [Wildfire Smoke and Air Quality Health Reference Document | ontario.ca](#)

Thank you for your continued dedication to resident care and safety. Your efforts to ensure their comfort are deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,



Sandra Lawson
Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Operations Division
Ministry of Long-Term Care

- c: Peter Kaftarian, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC)
Deborah Richardson, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health (MOH)
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Elizabeth Walker, Executive Lead, Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health, MOH
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Lindsay Jones, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
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Michael Jacek, Senior Advisor on Social and Health Policy, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Michael Sherar, President and CEO, Public Health Ontario
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