



### Safe Use of P2 Masks in Smoke Affected Areas

**INFORM STAFF BY:**  
Face-to-face

#### **\*\* Immediate Attention & Action \*\***

For all sites that are located in smoke affected areas as a result of bushfires. Outdoor workers should have priority in the supply of P2 Masks where supplies are limited.

#### **Guidance for the safe use of P2 Masks in smoke affected areas**

- With the ongoing bushfire conditions in Australia, air quality continues to be an issue in smoke affected areas. Air Quality Index (AQI) data is monitored by relevant state departments and is available online.
- The activity recommendations based on the AQI level is based on entire population data and is necessarily conservative given the inclusion of infants, the elderly and infirm.
- Advice provided to Australia Post by an independent occupational hygienist has indicated that hazardous AQI exposure levels are capable of being safely controlled by the correct use of a P2 mask. P2 masks filter out the fine particles in smoke.
- You can watch **how to fit a P2 mask** here or follow these tips: <https://youtu.be/bo-PEzHE7iw>
  - Remove glasses and hats. Tie back long hair so it does not become tangled in the straps of the respiratory protection
  - Put the mask on your face, ensuring the nose piece is at the top of the mask
  - Place the headband or ties over the head and at the base of the neck
  - Compress the mask against the face to ensure a seal across the bridge of the nose
  - Compress the mask to ensure a seal across the cheeks and the face; and
  - Conduct a fit check: check the seal of the mask by gently inhaling. If the mask is not drawn in towards the face, or air leaks around the face seal, readjust the mask and repeat process or check for defects in the mask. If the mask still leaks you may need to try a different size or style of mask.
- It can be difficult to maintain a tight seal for people with facial hair. If you maintain facial hair for religious or other cultural reasons, please discuss your options for inside work with your manager.
- P2 masks are effective in hazardous smoke conditions for at least 2 weeks - you can tell when a mask is no longer effective when you are able to detect the smell of smoke whilst it is in use. You should change your mask if it becomes damp as it will no longer be effective.
- Air quality is one measure Australia Post will take into account when determining if it continues to be safe to operate under certain conditions. For example, we will also consider other relevant weather conditions, visibility and advice from relevant authorities.
- You should also take into account your own individual circumstances. If you have an existing heart or lung condition, are over 65, are pregnant or have other relevant health concerns, you should not perform outdoor activities if the AQI is hazardous.
- If you experience symptoms during your duties that mean you are not safe to continue working, please stop, advise your manager and obtain medical advice as needed.
- The safety of our people will always remain our number one priority.
- Should you have any questions, please speak to your manager and/or safety partner.