



NEWS RELEASE

MAYOR CHRIS BEUTLER



LINCOLN-LANCASTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
3140 N Street, Lincoln NE 68510 • Phone: 441-8000
Fax: 441-6229

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 31, 2011
FOR MORE INFORMATION: **Scott E. Holmes:** 402-441-8634
Rick Thorson: 402-441-6236

Health Advisory – LPS Fire People with Heart and Lung Disease Warned to Stay Inside

“As a result of an overnight fire at the Lincoln Public Schools Administration building, the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department is advising people with heart or lung disease, such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma, the elderly, children and pregnant women to avoid prolonged or heavy exertion and limit time spent outdoors due to high levels of air pollution,” said Scott E. Holmes, Environmental Public Health Manager, with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. “Smoke from the fire is lingering throughout the community. Smoke is made up of tiny particles and gases which, when breathed into the lungs, can cause asthma attacks, make chronic bronchitis and emphysema worse, and cause angina in some people with heart disease.”

Due to the levels of particle air pollution from smoke, people are advised to take the necessary precautions to prevent exposure. Keeping windows and doors closed in your home can give some protection from smoke. If you must drive somewhere, turn the car air conditioner to the “re-circulate” setting.

If people with lung or heart disease have symptoms worsened by smoke exposure, they should consult their health care provider immediately. These symptoms include repeated coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, wheezing, tightness or pain in the chest, palpitations, nausea, unusual fatigue or feeling light headed.

Other tips to protect your health and reduce your exposure to smoke :

- avoid using exhaust fans (kitchen, bathroom, clothes dryer, etc.)
- do not use whole house fans that draw outside air into your home

- if cooling is needed, turn air conditioning to re-circulate mode in home and car, or use ceiling fans or portable fans
- avoid indoor sources of air pollution, including tobacco smoke, frying or broiling foods, burning candles, vacuuming, and using paints, solvents, cleaning products and adhesives
- keep a several days supply of medication available

The Health Department monitors air quality 24 hours a day for Carbon Monoxide, Ozone, and PM2.5 (fine particles). The Air Quality Index for Lincoln is updated daily and can be found by going to the City of Lincoln's web site: lincoln.ne.gov and using the keyword "air".

###