

What's in Your Lungs?

CROP RESIDUE BURNING



Crop residue burning (CRB) occurs as a result of the remainder of grain harvest stubble being burnt off. Crop residue includes straw, stubble, or chaff from a crop, or the remains of a crop that is not harvested.

When CRB occurs, it can produce large amounts of air pollution which may affect air quality in your communities and homes.

LIKELY DURATION

CRB typically occurs after harvest season in the fall months.

HEALTH IMPACT

CRB emits many harmful particles such as black carbon and carbon dioxide that affect air quality. The particles released from CRB can remain in the air for a long period of time and travel quickly to surrounding areas.

Individuals can breathe in these particles deep into their lungs, which affects their health. The gases released due to CRB can aggravate eye and skin diseases and cause heart and lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma. Individuals with pre-existing lung diseases such as asthma and COPD are more susceptible to breathing difficulties due to CRB.

Everyone can be impacted by smoke. Common signs or symptoms of CRB smoke inhalation include:

- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Sore eyes
- Coughing
- Sinus congestion

B R E A T H E
the lung association

lungsask.ca



Great Plains
Air Zone

GPAZ.org

PREVENTION

To better manage your health, individuals should take the following steps to protect themselves from CRB smoke.

Before crop burning season:

- Familiarize yourself with crops/fields near you
- Gather supplies such as respirator masks. A respirator is a mask that fits tightly to your face to filter out particles before you can breathe it in

During a crop burning smoke event:

- Seal off areas in your home where smoke can enter such as fireplaces, windows, doors, and stoves.
- Wear a respirator mask, if needed.
- Avoid using candles, gas, propane, wood-burning stoves, fireplaces, or aerosol sprays and do not fry or broil meat, smoke tobacco products, or using a central vacuum.
- If your air conditioning system has a fresh air intake, set the system to recirculate mode or close the outdoor intake damper.
- Pay attention to any health symptoms if you have asthma, COPD, heart disease, or are pregnant. Seek medical help if you need it.

After crop burning season:

- Take steps to reduce your exposure to smoke. Smoke can stay in the air for days after a fire ends.
- Protect yourself against ash when you clean up. Wear gloves, long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and shoes and socks to protect your skin. Wear goggles to protect your eyes.
- Wash off any ash that gets on your skin, eyes or mouth as soon as you can.
- Limit how much ash you breathe in by wearing an N95 respirator.
- Respirators are not made to fit children.
- If you have heart or lung disease, ask your doctor if it is safe for you to wear a respirator.
- Pay attention to any health symptoms if you or your children have asthma, COPD, heart disease, or are pregnant. Seek medical help if you need it.

Alternatives to crop burning:

- Chopping and spreading the straw across a wide area
- Choose a crop variety with a lower straw-to-grain ratio
- Do not over fertilize crops as it increases straw production without increasing grain production

Did you know that air quality is measured 365 days a year in Saskatchewan?

[Saskatchewan Air Quality Index Monitoring Page](#)

[Air Quality Health Index](#)

[Environment Canada Alerts](#)

[Fire Bans](#)