



12 September 2009

Smoke alert for people with asthma

Hazard reduction burns are planned for the weekend which brings this warning from the Ambulance Service of New South Wales.

"Smoke can affect people with respiratory illnesses, and Paramedics are concerned that people with asthma may be affected" Paramedic Kristie Sky said.

"During bushfires, we often see an increase in calls to people suffering from asthma and other respiratory problems".

"An unusually high level of smoke in the atmosphere irritates the airways and can make a respiratory condition a lot worse."

"People with asthma in particular, need to be aware of early warning signs especially if their condition does not respond to their usual medication."

"The Ambulance Service is concerned patients may wait too long before calling for an ambulance".

"It is not uncommon to be called to people who have stopped breathing as a result of their delay in calling," Kristie Sky said.

The Service operates an extensive fleet of ambulances crewed by highly trained Paramedics ready to respond any time of the day or night who are well equipped to treat people with asthma and other respiratory problems.

"If your asthma does not respond quickly to your normal medication, call Triple Zero '000' and get help immediately".

"And remember if you must go out while there's smoke in the air, be sure to take all respiratory medication with you," Kristie Sky said.



Basic asthma tips you should follow:

- Position the person sitting upright.
- Loosen clothing around the neck and chest.
- Assist the person to take their prescribed reliever medication as per their 'asthma action plan'.
- If there is no relief from medication or the asthma attack is severe, call Triple Zero '000' for an ambulance immediately.

~Ends~

For further information, local comment or media opportunities please contact the Ambulance Media Unit on (02) 9320 7796.

Kristie Sky
Ambulance Media
Ambulance Service of NSW
Balmain Road (Locked Bag 105)
Rozelle NSW 2039

T: (02) 9320-7796 / 7 | **F:** (02) 9320-7804

email: media@ambulance.nsw.gov.au

website: www.ambulance.nsw.gov.au