



**23 September 2009**

### **Dust Haze brings warnings from Ambulance**

With the dust blanket covering most of the state combined with high winds, the Ambulance Service of New South Wales brings these warnings:

“Dust can affect people with respiratory illnesses, and paramedics are concerned that people with asthma may be affected” Paramedic Kristie Sky said.

“We have already seen an increase in calls to people suffering from asthma and other respiratory problems”.

“An unusually high level of dust in the atmosphere can cause irritation to 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.”

“If your asthma does not respond quickly to your normal medication, call Triple Zero (000) and get help immediately”.

The Ambulance Service of New South Wales recommends that you stay inside where possible and remember if you must go out be sure to take all respiratory medication with you.

Visibility on our roads has been reduced by the dust in the air - Ambulance recommends motorists take extra care when driving.

- **Drive to the conditions** – remember, the speed limit is the maximum speed in good conditions. In adverse conditions **SLOW DOWN!**
- **Always** maintain a safe distance between you and the car in front. A gap of at least three seconds between cars is suggested in good conditions. A longer gap is recommended if you are carrying extra weight such as a trailer or if the road/weather conditions are less than ideal.
- **Drive with your headlights on**, even during daylight hours as it will make you more visible to other road users.
- **Always** ensure that every person in the car is wearing a seatbelt at all times. Pets should also be properly restrained.
- Children **MUST** always be restrained in an approved RTA fitted child seat or capsule.



- **Alcohol and driving DO NOT mix** – ensure that only licensed sober drivers get behind the wheel.
- **Never use your mobile phone or text whilst driving.** Use a 'hands free' unit or better still, delegate all mobile phone duties to someone else in the car.
- Motorcyclists and pillion passengers **MUST** always remember to wear visible protective clothing & footwear as well as an approved Australian Standards Helmet.

**For more information about air pollution see:**

[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/PublicHealth/environment/air/air\\_pollution.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/PublicHealth/environment/air/air_pollution.asp)

In the event of a medical emergency, **ring TRIPLE ZERO (000)**, ask for ambulance and stay on the line with the operations centre whilst ambulance paramedics are dispatched to your location.

~ ENDS ~

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

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