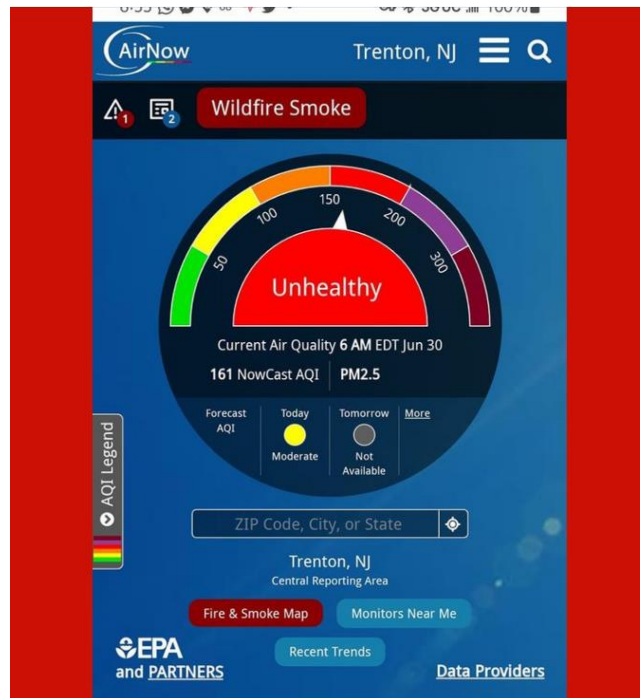


Hamilton Leadership Ignores ADA Responsibilities For Public Events



Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), towns are responsible to ensure that its town City sponsored events and meetings are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. This policy upholds the commitment of the City of Philadelphia (City) to operate the policies, practices, procedures, services, buildings, and activities so that, when viewed in their entirety, they are accessible to and useable by people with disabilities. Cultural festivals, craft fairs, music events, marathons, public meetings, and rallies are but a few of the many events and meetings that take place every year in Philadelphia. People with disabilities must be able to obtain or enjoy the same programs, services, and activities that are available to non-disabled people.

At events and meetings sponsored by the City of Philadelphia, member of the public with disabilities must be able to:

- Obtain information about the meeting or event.

- Use meeting location via accessible route;
- Find and use accessible parking/loading zones;
- **Be able to fully participate in the program**; and
- Use public toilets, water fountains, first aid stations, and other amenities.

On Friday, June 30, 2023, in Hamilton township, Mercer County, there was an event and fireworks display that went on for hours outside. The leadership of the town was aware of the air quality issues, you could see the haze above one's head. In addition, the US government website (AIRNOW.gov) clearly demonstrated air quality levels measuring 164.

2010 ADA Standards (2010 Standards) are online at:<https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/2010ADASTandards.htm#4>.

Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), towns are responsible for physical accessibility and program accessibility. Physical accessibility ensures that ALL individuals can access the physical environment and program accessibility ensures equal access to programs, services, activities, and information provided by the town. Access should be provided to all disabilities including, but not limited to, auditory, cognitive, physical, speech, and visual.

If the AQI is 151 to 200, most people will start noticing some minor effects like a scratchy throat, runny nose and maybe some nausea. If you're in a sensitive group – for example, if you've been diagnosed with asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) – then you'll want to look out for signs of more severe health problems, like chest tightness, an inability to catch your breath, and sudden dizziness or confusion. The evening of the event in Hamilton the AQI was 164.

This means, any senior citizen, any person with a medical condition, were all excluded from the fireworks event. The township had the ability to move the event to another day to ensure that **ALL RESIDENTS** could participate. The leadership chose not to do that. This is not the first time that those with disabilities were ignored at Hamilton Twp events. A few years ago, during a large festival in Hamilton, there was a complete lack of handicap parking or accommodation for those with handicaps to park and enter the event.

Several hundred wildfires are continuing to burn across several Canadian provinces this weekend, with an ongoing impact on impact air quality for vast swaths of the North American continent.

Earlier this week the air quality in Toronto was assessed to be among the worst in the world, just weeks after the wildfires had left New York City with that dubious title.

As the U.S. prepares to celebrate the July Fourth holiday, its northern neighbors are marking Canada Day on Saturday, but the kinds of group celebration that normally entails are difficult — or unsafe — in several parts of that country. Indeed in Montreal, the poor air quality has prompted officials to cancel many outdoor activities, and they have begun handing out N95 face masks to residents, as recommended whenever the air quality index breaches 150. Possibly the Canadians can teach the leadership of Hamilton township what it means to focus on public safety. There were no masks handed out to residents that attended the fireworks event in Hamilton last evening.

Medical professionals say that poor air quality can lead to higher rates of conditions like asthma in the short-term, but in the most severe cases, the long-term effects of these microscopic particles can include blood clots that precipitate cardiac arrests or angina.

That smoke is again heading south to parts of the Midwest and East Coast of the United States. It's the worst Canadian wildfire season on record thanks to unusually high temperatures and dry conditions. The fires are raging from as far west as British Columbia to the eastern province of Nova Scotia. They are also found in heavily populated Quebec, though recent rainfall means more than 2,000 residents who have been evacuated from their homes can now start to return.

If the AQI in your area is above 150, avoid going outside if you can. Avoid things like exercising outside or running errands that can wait until the air quality has improved. If you need to be outside, use a well-fitting N-95 mask if you have one. Because of those small pm2.5 particles, something like a bandana won't protect your lungs from the smoke. Adding the smoke and remnants from a fireworks

display, one must question the common sense of those in political power in Hamilton township.

Self-care for smoke-filled days

Try and use a hydrating moisturizer to keep those smoke particles out of your pores. This will also help if your skin feels dry from the smoky air.

If the smell of the fires is getting to you, try dabbing a bit of essential oil under your nose or use a strong-scented ChapStick to mask the smell.

Stay hydrated! Fires usually happen where the air is dry and windy. And the weather patterns that carry the smoke can bring those conditions as well.

And try to stay calm. Smoke days are stressful and are an upsetting reminder of our overheating planet. Anxiety will worsen the health effects of smoke exposure, so it might be helpful to remember that other communities have come through similar or worse smoke situations, and the air will eventually clear.