

# California Expands PPE Stockpile and Employee Training Requirements to Address Wildfire Smoke Events

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On September 27, 2021, the Governor of California signed [Assembly Bill 73](#) (AB 73) which expands worker protections from wildfire smoke.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, California enacted Health & Safety Code section 131021 last year. It requires the State Department of Public Health and Office of Emergency Services to establish a stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE) to address pandemics and other health emergencies. In developing the guidelines for creating this stockpile, the Department must consider, among other things, the amount and type of PPE required for health care workers and other “essential workers” during a 90-day period.

AB 73 broadens the scope of this law to specify that wildfire smoke events are considered health emergencies for these purposes. In addition, the definition of an “essential worker” was expanded to include agricultural workers. The bill goes into effect immediately. As a practical result, the Department and Office of Emergency Services will need to re-evaluate the PPE stockpile to ensure it includes sufficient PPE to address wildfire smoke events and to protect agricultural workers during pandemics, wildfire smoke events, and other health emergencies.

The bill also requires the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Division) to review and update the wildfire [smoke training requirements](#) that employers must follow. Critically, the employee training needs to be provided in a language and manner that is readily understandable by employees. Updates to these training requirements will be posted on the Division’s website.

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National Law Review, Volume XI, Number 271

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/california-expands-ppe-stockpile-and-employee-training-requirements-to-address>