



Executive Directive 18-04

Improving San Francisco's Response to Future Air Quality Incidents

December 7, 2018

The City and County of San Francisco (City) is a leader on climate change and implementing policies to reduce our City's carbon emissions and impact on the global environment. As we continue to reduce our emissions, we must also better prepare for natural disasters that are becoming more severe as a result of climate change. In the last few years, California has experienced multiple wildfires throughout the state causing unprecedented and sustained poor air quality in the Bay Area. While we provide support and resources to those lives and communities directly impacted by wildfires, we must also improve our City's ability to adapt and respond to growing climate threats, especially wildfires.

San Francisco's current air quality emergency plan was revised following the 2017 North Bay Fire and anticipated short duration air quality events. Prior to 2017, it was uncommon for the Air Quality Index (AQI) to rise above 50. The November 2018 poor air quality event lasted 13 consecutive days where the AQI was at least 150.

During the unprecedented November 2018 poor air quality event, San Francisco Department of Emergency Management (DEM) activated our emergency operations center to coordinate our City's local and regional response. Daily alerts were sent through AlertSF, San Francisco's emergency text message system, which were supported by outreach through traditional media (both in English and other languages) and social media. Multilingual information was provided to the general public through City agencies, elected officials, and community based organizations that serve hard to reach populations to encourage people to stay indoors and provide specific advice on activities based on the corresponding air quality level. SF72.org, the City's emergency preparedness website, provided a map of all public "air respite centers," including facilities operated by the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department, the San Francisco Public Libraries, the Fine Arts Museums, and other privately-owned buildings.

The City also took proactive measures to provide support to vulnerable members of the community. Additional shelter mats were added for unsheltered residents, and masks and bottles of waters were distributed by the City's homeless outreach teams. Masks were also distributed by DPH to City employees who work outside so they could continue to serve the public. The Human Services Agency (HSA) established early and consistent contact with their most vulnerable clients and provided safety tips and guidance. DEM, DPH, and HSA coordinated messaging to the public to reach out to family members, neighbors, and friends, especially those who are home-bound or who have health conditions.

San Francisco also provided mutual aid to the Camp Fire in Butte County in the form of 67 staff and 9 deployed fire engines. Proactive mutual aid assistance during red flag warnings or active

wildfires can help quickly suppress and contain fires to minimize the resulting air quality impacts.

I believe the City and community's response was a contributing factor in ensuring there were no major reported incidents. However, San Francisco's existing air quality emergency plans and protocols must be updated to account for future sustained poor air quality events. Our City must also be a leader for the Bay Area region by proactively coordinating discussions on effective strategies and actionable thresholds to protect the public, with particular focus on our most vulnerable populations, during these events.

Directives:

Through this Executive Directive, I hereby direct that action be taken as specified in the following four areas:

1. Emergency Plan: The Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) will co-lead the revision of the plan within six months to respond and prepare San Francisco for future sustained poor air quality incidents.
 - a. The Plan will provide recommendations and guidelines on how to protect health during poor air quality. The guidelines, tied to air quality thresholds, should include advice on distribution protocols and when to use masks.
 - b. The Plan will identify specific strategies to reach our vulnerable populations, and proactive early education and capacity building opportunities through community networks.
 - c. A draft of the Plan will be presented at the Disaster Council meeting in the first quarter of 2019.
2. Task Force: DEM will chair a Task Force that will include DPH and the City Administrator's Office to establish criteria, locations, and measures of effectiveness for public respite facilities during poor air quality and other weather-related events. The Task Force shall also include, but shall not be limited to, the Human Services Agency, Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, Recreation and Parks Department, and the San Francisco Public Library. After completing the tasks above, the Task Force will complete an inventory of locations available for use during poor air quality and other weather-related events.
3. Mutual Aid: DEM will establish a roster of civilian, multi-agency personnel of various disciplines (emergency management, logistics, public information, finance, public health, utilities, animal care and control, etc.) that can be pre-positioned or rapidly deployed to areas in anticipation of, or to mitigate against, widespread impacts and to support recovery efforts. This roster will be in addition to existing mutual aid deployment plans maintained by our City's public safety departments.
4. Regional Coordination: DEM and DPH will work with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and other Bay Area cities and counties to develop consistent and multilingual educational messaging and recommendations. The information shall also be accessible for people with disabilities.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
SAN FRANCISCO



LONDON N. BREED
MAYOR

This Executive Directive will take effect immediately, and will remain in place until rescinded by future written communication.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "London Breed".

London N. Breed
Mayor, City & County of San Francisco