
Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program

What's an Air Resource Advisor?

There's a new Technical Specialist (THSP) available to incident management teams and agency administrators. Air Resource Advisors (THSP-ARA) are trained to be dispatched to an incident to assist with understanding and predicting smoke impacts on the public and fire personnel. They analyze, summarize, and communicate these impacts to incident teams, air quality regulators, and the public.



Smoke from wildfires can have an enormous direct impact on the public and fire personnel, affecting both their health and safety, interfering with transportation and operational safety, and upsetting tourism and local economies. ARA's are technical specialists with expertise in air quality science including: air quality monitoring, smoke modeling, pollutant health thresholds, and communicating about smoke risks and mitigation. During wildfire incidents when smoke is a concern, their objective is to provide timely smoke impact and forecast information and messages based on best-available science. They work on Incident Management Teams with their PIOs, FBANs, IMETs as well as others addressing smoke issues. They coordinate with multiple agencies to address public health risks and concerns, risks to transportation safety, and fire personnel exposure including in base camp.

What exactly does an ARA do?

- Provide, install, operate air quality monitors and interpret data for base/ICP/spike camps and communities as needed.
- Summarize information about current air quality conditions compared to national health thresholds and communicate findings with partner agencies and the public.
- Utilize and interpret national smoke models and run fire specific models to provide forecasts of future air quality impacts.
- Assist safety officers and others addressing incident personnel impacts from smoke.
- Advise on how to reduce risk and mitigate smoke exposure of the public and personnel.
- Support IMTs in public meetings and in media such as Inciweb, AirNow and smoke blogs.
- Coordinate with public health agencies and air quality regulators to address their concerns about smoke impacts of fire operations on the public.



How does an ARA get assigned to an incident?

A (THSP-ARA) for an incident or agency administrator is available by request from the ARA order line at 661-438-1272. An available ARA's name and host dispatch will be provided. If an Incident Commander or agency administrator believes that smoke is likely to be an issue, it's wise to call right away, before the air quality issues get out of hand with severe impacts. Other ARA program or training questions, contact Pete Lahm, Program Lead at 202-205-1084.