



Haze: West eases below 200 as Indonesia tries dry ice

Description

Singapore’s west spent Wednesday night and Thursday morning in the Very Unhealthy range, as [NEA’s haze update](#) flagged widespread hotspots in Kalimantan and Sumatra and a continued risk of severe transboundary haze. Across the region, Indonesia is trialling dry ice over South Sumatra and Malaysia has changed the rules on when schools shut.

Singapore: west dips back under 200

The west’s 24-hour PSI held above 200 from 9pm on Wednesday, 14 October, and peaked at 212 at noon on Thursday. It fell to 196 at 3pm and 188 at 5pm. At 5pm on 15 October, the other regions read 186 in the central region, 161 in the east, 156 in the south and 122 in the north, all in the Unhealthy range (101 to 200).

Hourly readings tell a different story from the 24-hour average. At 5pm the 1-hour PM2.5 concentration was 205 µg/m³ in the central region, in Band 3 (High), with the south at 157 and the east at 161, both also High. The west read 155 and the north 102, in Band 2 (Elevated). On Wednesday afternoon the west hit 288 µg/m³, in Band 4 (Very High).

NEA’s morning update recorded moderate to dense smoke haze over parts of Kalimantan, Peninsular Malaysia, Sumatra, western Sarawak and southern Thailand, with Unhealthy to Hazardous readings at stations in Kalimantan, Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Sumatra and western Sarawak. Its outlook: “While showers may bring some respite, the hotspot and smoke haze situation is likely to remain elevated especially over areas experiencing prolonged dry conditions, with a continued risk of severe transboundary haze occurrence.” Winds are forecast to blow from the southeast to south. The 24-hour PSI forecast is Unhealthy to Very Unhealthy.

Indonesia: dry ice over Palembang

Indonesia is trialling dry ice, or solid carbon dioxide, to break up smoke over urban areas of South Sumatra, its first attempt at the technique, CNA reported. Planes from Sri Mulyono Herlambang Air

Force Base in Palembang are to release 1.5 tonnes of dry ice, under a plan from the Coordinating Ministry for Political and Security Affairs.

The aim is to push smoke trapped near the ground higher into the atmosphere, rather than to make rain. Coordinating Minister Dudung Abdurachman: “The function of dry ice is to break down the smoke that was previously below so that it can rise upwards.” Cloud seeding for rain to put out fires continues alongside the trial.

Officials hope to lift visibility in smoke-hit areas from 1km to 5km or more. If the trial works, Central Kalimantan is next in line. The operation follows a direct instruction from President Prabowo Subianto.

Malaysia: schools close only above API 200

Malaysia’s Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek has raised the threshold for haze school closures to bring it in line with the country’s National Haze Action Plan, CNA reported from her Facebook post. Schools now close where the Air Pollutant Index (API) goes above 200, and outdoor activities stop at 100 or above.

Under the old guidelines, schools closed when the API went above 180, or stayed above 150 for three straight days. Parents worried for their children’s health can keep them home if they inform the school. “The safety and health of children remain our priority. However, every school day also holds great value for their development and learning,” she wrote.

What the readings mean for you today

NEA’s advice ties activity to the hourly figure. Where the 1-hour PM2.5 is in Band 3 (High), as in the central, east and south regions at 5pm, healthy people should avoid strenuous outdoor activity for the next hour. The elderly, pregnant women, children and people with chronic lung or heart disease should avoid all outdoor activity for the next hour.

If the 24-hour PSI moves into Very Unhealthy, healthy people should avoid prolonged or strenuous outdoor exertion, the elderly, pregnant women and children should minimise outdoor activity, and people with chronic lung or heart disease should avoid it. Free N95 masks for eligible residents are available at community clubs and vending machines, with locations on [HazeMaskGoWhere](#).

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