

SINGAPORE REGISTERS HAZE CONCERNS WITH INDONESIA

Haze situation update

Singapore, 10 September 2015 – There has been a slight deterioration in the hazy conditions in Singapore since this morning. The haziness is due to smoke haze blown from Sumatra by the prevailing south or southwesterly winds. As at 7pm today the 24-hr PSI was 116-128, in the low end of the Unhealthy range, and the 1-hr PM_{2.5} was 130-158 µg/m³.

2 The number of hotspots detected in Sumatra increased to 328 today from 140 yesterday. Smoke haze was observed in central and southern Sumatra. Some haze has spread to the sea areas east of Sumatra and south of Singapore.

3 The hazy conditions are expected to persist for the rest of today. For tomorrow, as the prevailing winds are forecast to blow from the south-southeast or south, hazy conditions can still be expected. The 24-hr PSI for the next 24 hours is expected to be in the low to mid sections of the Unhealthy range, and may further deteriorate if the winds are unfavourable.

Singapore conveys concern to Indonesia

4 Minister for the Environment and Water Resources Dr Vivian Balakrishnan has conveyed Singapore's deep concern with the deteriorating haze situation to the Indonesian Minister of Environment and Forestry Dr Siti Nurbaya Bakar today. Minister Balakrishnan called for urgent actions to be undertaken, including stricter enforcement actions against the perpetrators. Minister Balakrishnan reiterated Singapore's offer of an assistance package for Indonesia. He also requested for information on those responsible for the haze so as to facilitate appropriate enforcement action.

5 Transboundary haze is a recurring problem not only for Singapore and Indonesia, but for other countries in the region as well. The region's susceptibility to land and forest fires during the traditional dry season (typically from June to October) increases the probability of transboundary haze. As the region is experiencing El Niño conditions this year, drier weather is likely to prevail. This would exacerbate the impact of transboundary haze caused by land and forest fires.

6 At the 17th Meeting of the Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee (MSC) on Transboundary Haze Pollution on 28 July 2015 held in Jakarta, Indonesia, the Ministers noted that ASEAN Leaders had encouraged MSC countries to share information on hotspot areas that cause transboundary haze. Minister Balakrishnan had reiterated the need for greater transparency and accountability, and suggested information exchange on a Government-to-Government basis to establish facts on the ground and to identify errant firms.

7 Since 2005, the Singapore Government has consistently offered haze assistance packages to the Indonesian Government in the run-up to the traditional dry season from June to October. Singapore renewed its haze assistance offer to Indonesia in June this year, and stands ready to assist Indonesia in its haze and fire combatting efforts.

8 The assistance package offered by Singapore comprises:

(i) One C-130 aircraft for cloud seeding operations;

(ii) Up to two C-130 aircraft to ferry a fire-fighting assistance team from the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF);

(iii) A team from SCDF to provide assessment and planning assistance to our Indonesian counterparts in their fire-fighting efforts;

(iv) High resolution satellite pictures and hotspot coordinates; and

(v) One Chinook helicopter with one SCDF water bucket for aerial fire-fighting.

Health Advisory

9 The health impact of haze is dependent on one's health status, the PSI level, and the length and intensity of outdoor activity. Reducing outdoor activities and physical exertion can help limit the ill effects from haze exposure. Given the air quality forecast for the next 24 hours, healthy persons should reduce prolonged or strenuous outdoor physical exertion. The elderly, pregnant women and children should minimise prolonged or strenuous outdoor physical exertion, while those with chronic lung or heart disease should avoid prolonged or strenuous outdoor physical exertion. Persons who are not feeling well, especially the elderly and children, and those with chronic heart or lung conditions, should seek medical attention.

10 For updates, visit our NEA website (www.nea.gov.sg), the haze microsite (www.haze.gov.sg), follow us on NEA Facebook (www.facebook.com/NEASingapore) and NEA Twitter (@NEAsg), or download the myENV app.

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