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## Canadian Wildfire Smoke Threatens World Cup Final Air Quality



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NEW YORK: Smoke from massive Canadian wildfires has reduced air quality across parts of the northeastern United States, prompting health warnings ahead of Sunday's 2026 FIFA World Cup final between Spain and Argentina at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

Authorities in New York and New Jersey issued air quality advisories after smoke from hundreds of active wildfires, particularly in Ontario, spread across the region. Weather experts said a

persistent heat dome has trapped harmful fine particles near the ground, worsening air quality.

The New York City Department of Health advised residents to limit outdoor activities, avoid strenuous exercise, and take extra precautions for children, older adults, and people with respiratory illnesses. KN95 masks have also been distributed at public locations.

The poor air quality has raised concerns because MetLife Stadium is an open-air venue expected to host about 82,500 spectators, leaving players and fans exposed to outdoor conditions. Health experts warn prolonged exposure to wildfire smoke can affect breathing, especially among vulnerable groups.

Spain adjusted its training schedule in New Jersey because of the smoky conditions, while Argentina's preparations in Atlanta remained largely unaffected. FIFA and local authorities have not announced any changes to the match schedule. Forecasts suggest weekend rainfall could improve air quality before Sunday's kickoff.