

Aug, 9, 2023 Schnitzer Fire

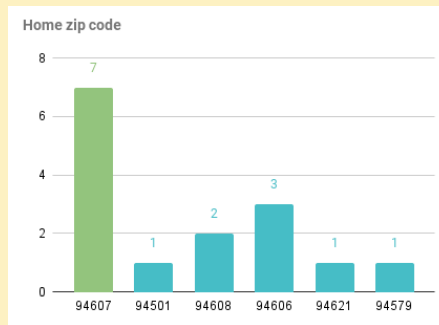
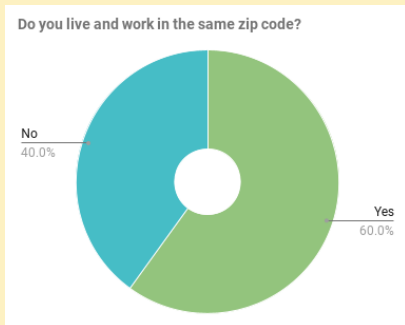
Impact on the Community



Survey Findings

On August 9, 2023, Schnitzer Steel (aka Radius Recycling) was host to yet another fire at their 1101 Embarcadero West facility. While the Bay Area Air Quality Management District issued an air quality advisory due to smoke from the fire, WOEIP conducted an online survey to gain a better understanding of how the fire impacted community members' lived experience.

Who responded?



- 15 responses were collected from 8/14/23–8/24/23.
- A majority of respondents (73%) live or work in West Oakland.
- 60% of respondents work in the same zip code they live in, leaving 40% of respondents to commute across zip codes (several by bike).
- Several people mentioned living in households with children.

Key themes

Lack of communication

Only one respondent reported receiving any official notification of the fire (via AC Alert, an opt-in service). Several people indicated a lack of information regarding recommended precautions and efficacy of existing preventive measures at the Schnitzer site.

Disruption of regular activities

Most respondents reported minor to significant disruption of their daily activities, including work, recreation, and sleep.

Anxiety and distress

Respondents consistently expressed concern about health impacts, diminishing quality of life, and enforcement failures.

Health impacts

A wide range of health impacts were reported by all but one respondent (see page 2).

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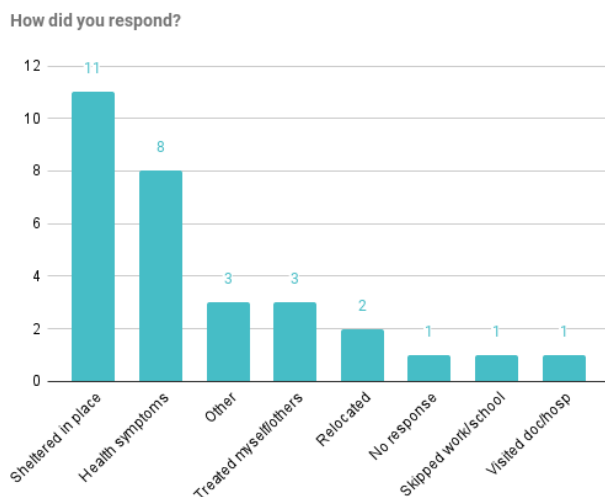


Survey Findings

How did you respond to the fire?

87% of respondents found themselves forced to shelter in place or relocate all together, in an attempt to avoid the fire's toxic fumes.

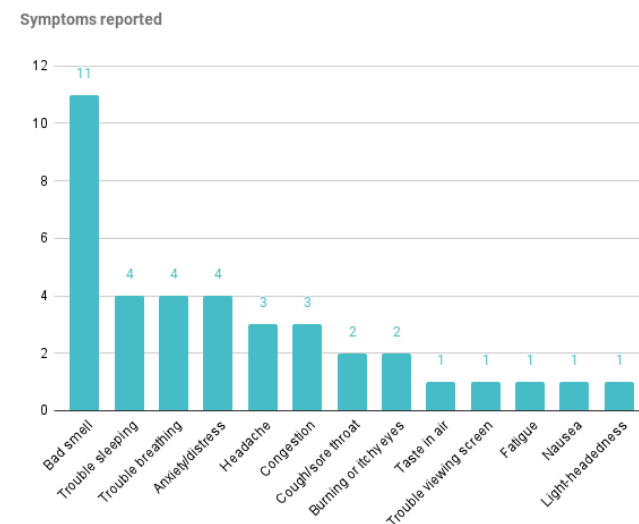
Of the 53% of respondents who experienced health symptoms, about half had to take active treatment measures (whether through self-care, care for others, or visiting a healthcare provider).



What symptoms did you experience?

More than half (53%) reported experience multiple health-related symptoms.

More than a quarter of respondents reported trouble sleeping (27%), trouble breathing (27%), or some form of anxiety/distress (27%).



“ I went outside and saw my neighbor holding her baby and staring out into the smoke. It was a disturbing image and events like this decrease the ability for that baby to live and thrive in Oakland.

“ I was out skating Oakland with friends the evening of the fire, we hit suddenly hit an invisible wall of air that tasted metallic and like fire, it was sudden and intense, we turned back towards the lake.

“ I have irritation in my throat, headache, eye irritation...Every time I go outside, I cough and have a runny nose. I have COPD and am concerned about the effects from ingesting the smoke.

“ The black smoke from the fire engulfed the area where I live. I felt so vulnerable that this happened and could happen again.

“ I had to administer additional asthma medication once I got to work, and dealt with a headache and lightheadedness for the first few hours of the day...

“ It is horrible to have to go indoors when the air isn't clean. With the least amount of leisure time I've, I want to be able to use the air where I shouldn't have to think about others polluting the air. This is def. not okay!