



May 23, 2023
For immediate release

Update on Rice County landfill fire

The Rice County landfill experienced a fire in the evening hours on Monday, May 22. The cause of the fire has yet to be determined, but work is ongoing to mitigate any and all issues within the county's control.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has been notified of the incident and Rice County staff are continuing to monitor the situation at the landfill off of Hwy. 3 in Bridgewater Township while staying in communication with the Northfield Area Fire and Rescue Service. As issues and concerns surrounding the fire at the Rice County landfill continue to be assessed, county officials wanted to provide an update and address certain questions and concerns that may have arisen.

Landfill fires can pose several hazards to both human health and the environment. The smoke and ash generated can contain particulate matter, which can cause respiratory issues, especially for individuals with pre-existing conditions. In addition, there are existing air quality issues in southern Minnesota related to the Canadian wildfires which caused the National Weather Service to issue a level orange air quality alert for May 23 (unhealthy for sensitive groups).

People should take precautions when the air quality is unhealthy. If possible, stay away from local sources of air pollution, limit or postpone physical activity and stay indoors. Anyone with asthma or other respiratory conditions like COPD should make sure they have their rescue or relief inhalers with them.

Updates will be provided as needed to ensure members of the public are kept abreast of the ongoing situation.

Again, the well-being of staff and county residents remains our top priority as we work to mitigate any ongoing issues related to the fire.

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