

**For immediate release 10/29/21**

**Attn: Local news, weather, health, and assignment editors**

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## **Stagnant Conditions, Colder Weather and Residential Wood Burning Leading to Deteriorating Air Quality**

*Valley residents asked not to burn, drive less and closely follow local air quality*

Current poor dispersion conditions and a stable atmosphere across the Valley has led to an increase in PM<sub>2.5</sub> (particulate matter 2.5 microns and smaller) concentrations across the region, which is more common during the cooler weather of the fall and winter seasons. Lingered smoke from wildfires in the region and residential wood burning activity in the cooler weather are also contributing to the current elevated air quality conditions. Valley residents are encouraged to take actions to reduce emissions where possible, and to closely follow local air quality readings at [myRAAN.com](http://myRAAN.com) or [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov).

November 1 marks the beginning of the Valley Air District's residential wood burning reduction program, reminding Valley residents that their cooperation is essential in protecting public health and improving wintertime air quality.

The District urges all Valley residents to help reduce harmful PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions and heat their homes by means other than burning wood whenever possible. Residential wood burning is one of the Valley's largest sources of wintertime PM 2.5 emissions and is shown to have a direct effect on neighborhood air quality. In addition, nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) from tailpipes can add the wintertime pollution problem.

"Less frequent winter storms and an increase in wildfires in recent years has led to significant challenges in reducing particulate matter pollution in the San Joaquin Valley," said District Executive Director and Air Pollution Control Officer, Samir Sheikh. "Choosing not to use your wood burning fireplace or fire pit this winter is critical in our pollution reduction efforts and key to public health."

The winter season residential wood burning reduction program runs from November 1 through the end of February every year, reducing PM 2.5 emissions from wood burning devices such as fireplaces, wood stoves, outdoor fire pits and chimeneas. During that time, the District releases a daily, county-by-county wood burning declaration based on the air quality forecast. Burning trash or yard refuse is always prohibited.

Daily burn information is available by visiting [www.valleyair.org/burnstatus](http://www.valleyair.org/burnstatus), by calling 1-800-SMOG INFO (766-4463), or by downloading the free "Valley Air" app on your mobile device. In addition, residents are invited to sign up for daily email wood-burning notifications by clicking [here](#). There are three declaration levels:



Mandatory curtailments do not apply to natural gas devices. Residences in areas with no natural gas service or where wood burning is the sole source of heat are exempt. Rural, mountain and foothill areas where propane tanks are used are considered to be *without* natural gas service. Outdoor wood burning devices at all residences are still subject to daily restrictions, regardless of exemption status.

Valley residents are encouraged to participate in the Burn Cleaner incentive program and receive as much as \$3,000 to upgrade from older, higher-polluting wood stoves and open-hearth fireplaces to natural gas devices. To participate in this program please visit [www.valleyair.org/burncleaner](http://www.valleyair.org/burncleaner).

Residents with EPA Certified wood and pellet-fueled devices may register them with the Valley Air District in order to use them when the declaration is "No Burning Unless Registered". Find out how to register by visiting: [www.valleyair.org/CBYBregistration](http://www.valleyair.org/CBYBregistration).

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**Media can use the following links to access our FTP site and download graphics to be used with this program. The folder titled "Residential Wood Burning (Media)".**

For users using a browser:

<ftp://vadpublicdoc:public.education@ftp.valleyair.org/Private/OC/>

For users using an FTP application:

<ftp://ftp.valleyair.org/Private/OC/>

Username: vadpublicdoc

Password: public.education