

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District News Release

For Immediate Release:
November 17, 2003

Contacts: Josette Merced Bello, Fresno
559-230-5850
Kelly Hogan Malay, Bakersfield
661-326-6981
Anthony Presto, Modesto
209-557-6400

Mandatory wood-burning prohibitions issued for Tuesday *Air quality unhealthy in Fresno and valley portion of Kern*

Due to expected unhealthy air pollution levels in Fresno and the valley portion of Kern counties, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District prohibits burning wood, manufactured firelogs or pellets in those areas on Tuesday, November 18. The temporary ban is in effect the entire day and evening, starting at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday morning and lasting until 11:59 p.m. that night. The ban applies to pellet stoves, as well as wood-burning fireplaces, inserts, and stoves.

Exemptions from burning restrictions apply to homes in which wood burning is the only source of heat because no other heating device is built into the home. Homes above 3,000 feet or those that do not have access to natural gas service – even if they have access to propane -- also are exempt from the burning restrictions.

Anyone who is not exempt and is caught burning illegally in Fresno or the valley portion of Kern counties on Tuesday is subject to fines.

Voluntary curtailment requests are being issued in other parts of the San Joaquin Valley. Air quality is forecast to be unhealthy for sensitive groups in Stanislaus and Tulare counties on Tuesday. Therefore, residents in those areas are asked to voluntarily refrain from burning wood to help improve air quality immediately and avoid mandatory prohibitions. To burn more cleanly, residents who choose to burn during a voluntary restriction are asked to use pellet stoves, manufactured firelogs and EPA-certified stoves or inserts.

Air quality for Madera, Merced, Kings and San Joaquin counties is forecast to be moderate for Tuesday. Therefore, curtailments are not necessary in those areas. The Air District reminds residents in all parts of the Valley not to burn trash, newspapers, magazines or treated wood in their fireplaces or stoves. Doing so is hazardous and illegal.

More information on the District's fireplace and wood stove program is available at www.valleyair.org.