

News Release

For immediate release

DATE 12-22-10

For: local news and
assignment editors



San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT



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Share holiday cheer, not smoke *Air officials urge restraint for holiday fires*

Valley Air District officials are urging residents to consider their health and that of their neighbors when planning to use their fireplaces this holiday season.

“Share the good cheer of the holidays, not wood smoke,” said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District’s executive director and air pollution control officer. “The fires that seem so cozy and inviting can actually cause your neighbors distress.”

Residential wood burning can produce up to 24 tons per day of harmful particulate matter (PM) Valley-wide on a winter day. PM is composed of soot, ash, tiny droplets of liquid and other material. Fine particulate matter – PM2.5 – has been linked to respiratory disease, heart attacks and even lung cancer.

The Air District’s Check Before You Burn program, in effect from November through February each winter, declares residential wood-burning curtailments by county when air quality is deteriorating.

“Because of the willingness of Valley residents to rise to the occasion, the past two winters have been the cleanest on record for the Valley,” Sadredin said. Additionally, the public’s participation in the program has resulted in several days so far this winter when air pollution concentrations were lower than expected.

When wood burning is prohibited, burning any solid fuel, including manufactured fire logs and pellets, is not allowed. However, two exemptions are available:

- If wood burning is the residence’s sole source of heat, or
- If the residence does not have access to natural gas, even if propane is used.

Violating a prohibition can result in a fine.

Wood-burning forecasts are issued each day by county and are in effect for 24 hours beginning
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Share holiday cheer, not smoke

12-22-10

Page 2 of 2

at midnight. Forecasts can be obtained by calling **1-800 SMOG INFO (766-4463)**, visiting <http://valleyair.org/aqinfo/WoodBurnPage.htm> and signing up for an automated email forecast at <http://www.valleyair.org/lists/list.htm>. The Christmas Eve forecast will be available Dec. 23 at 4:30 p.m.

“The best gift we can give each other is a healthy holiday,” Sadredin said.

For more information about the Air District, call a regional office in Modesto (209) 557-6400, Fresno (559) 230-6000, or Bakersfield (661) 392-5500.