

'Check Before You Burn' fires up Thursday

The Bakersfield Californian, Tuesday, Oct. 30, 2012

Starting Thursday, valley residents should look at the air district's forecast before setting flame to their firewood.

Residents can check with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to find out if residential wood burning is allowed once the seasonal "Check Before You Burn" program kicks into gear Nov 1.

The wintertime pollution prevention program is in its 10th season and aims to reduce levels of harmful particulate matter in the air basin, which includes part of Kern County, according to an air district news release. Fine-particulate matter can aggravate respiratory illnesses such as asthma and cause lung infections and bronchitis, the news release said, and has also been connected to increasing the risk of heart attacks and stroke.

According to the air district, residential wood burning is the "single largest source" of harmful particulate matter in the winter.

"(Check Before You Burn is) a health protection regulation and it makes a difference," said air district spokeswoman Janelle Schneider.

Before residents light a fire, they "need to take their neighbors' health into account as well as their own," she added.

On no burn days, residential wood burning, including fireplaces, pellet stoves, wood-burning inserts and heaters, and outdoor apparatus such as chimineas and fire pits, are forbidden. The restriction does not apply to gas fireplaces.

Even on days when residential wood burning is allowed, the district's news release recommended residents use dry, seasoned wood or manufactured fire logs.

Wood-burning prohibitions do not apply if a residence doesn't have access to natural gas, "even if propane is used," or if burning solid fuel is the only way to heat the residence, the news release said.

Residents who disregard the prohibition can be fined. Inspectors watch for the signs of burning and the air district also takes community complaints, Schneider said.

The program continues through the end of February.

Valley wood-burning curtailment program begins Thursday

Bee Staff Reports

Modesto Bee, Tuesday, Oct. 30, 2012

The 10th season of a wood-burning curtailment program begins Thursday, a pollution reduction effort aimed at making it easier for residents to breathe in the air in the San Joaquin Valley.

Residential wood burning is the single largest source of harmful particulate matter, known as PM-2.5, according to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

During winter, as much as 17 tons of PM-2.5 can be pumped into the sky daily, district officials say. The particulate matter can exacerbate respiratory illnesses, such as asthma and cause lung infections and bronchitis.

The "Check Before You Burn" program is critical in minimizing levels of PM-2.5 in the valley's eight-county region.

"Thanks to the public's support and cooperation, this rule is the single most effective, lowest cost regulation on record in the valley," said Seyed Sadredin, the district's executive director and air pollution control officer. "It is absolutely imperative to improved air quality."

Each day, the district issues a wood-burning forecast by county for one of two levels: "wood-burning prohibited" or "please burn cleanly."

When wood burning is prohibited, all residential wood burning is banned — including fireplaces, wood-burning inserts and heaters, pellet stoves and outdoor devices such as fire pits and chimeneas.

Otherwise, the district encourages residents to use manufactured fire logs, dry, seasoned wood or a gas fireplace.

There are two exceptions to wood-burning prohibitions:

- If a home does not have access to natural-gas serv-ice, even if propane is used.
- If burning solid fuel is the sole source of heat for a home.

Violators are subject to fines.

Daily wood-burning forecasts are available each day at 4:30 p.m. at www.valleyair.org/aqinfo/woodburnpage, by calling 1-(800) 766-4463, or by subscribing to the Air District's daily air quality forecast at www.valleyair.org/lists/list. The forecast will appear on the upper right corner of The Bee's weather page, too.

For more, visit www.valleyair.org or call district offices in Modesto at (209) 557-6400, Fresno at (559) 230-6000 or Bakersfield at (661) 326-6900.

Fireplace police warn that no-burn season starts Thursday

Central Valley Business Times, Tuesday, Oct. 30, 2012

The 10th season of a wintertime pollution-reduction program begins Thurs., Nov. 1 for the San Joaquin Valley.

It will mean that use of wood-burning fireplaces will be restricted if not prohibited. The curtailment is critical in minimizing levels of harmful particulate matter (PM) in the eight-county air basin, says the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

"Thanks to the public's support and cooperation, this rule is the single most-effective, lowest-cost regulation on record in the Valley," says Seyed Sadredin, the district's executive director and air pollution control officer. "It is absolutely imperative to improved air quality."

Each day, the Air District issues a wood-burning forecast by county for one of two levels: "Wood-burning prohibited" or "Please Burn Cleanly." When wood burning is prohibited, all residential wood burning -- including fireplaces, wood-burning inserts and heaters, pellet stoves and outdoor devices such as fire pits and chimineas -- is prohibited. When the forecast is "Please Burn Cleanly," the District encourages residents to use manufactured fire logs or dry, seasoned wood.

Gas fireplace use is always allowed.

Residential wood burning is the single largest source of harmful PM during winter and can pump 17 tons of PM into Valley skies daily, the pollution agency says. Fine-particulate matter (PM 2.5) exacerbates respiratory illness, such as asthma; causes lung infections and bronchitis; and has been correlated with increased risk of heart attacks and stroke.

There are two exceptions to wood-burning prohibitions:

- If the residence does not have access to natural-gas service, even if propane is used; or
- If burning solid fuel is the sole source of heat for the residence.

Prohibition violations are subject to fines.