

Check Before You Burn ends ninth season

The ninth season of the critical wintertime air quality program minimizing dangerous airborne particle pollution concluded Feb. 29 with an unusually high number of wood-burning curtailment days because of historically poor conditions.

Check Before You Burn runs from November through February each winter restricting the use of residential wood-burning devices when air quality deteriorates, to help prevent the build-up of fine-particulate matter (PM2.5). While the two previous winters were the cleanest on record for the eight-county Valley air basin, this winter historically dry, stagnant conditions resulted in strings of unbroken curtailments during December and January.

“Considering the abnormal conditions this winter that dealt not only us, but air districts statewide, one blow after another in terms of air quality, this rule was especially critical in minimizing, to the extent possible, this dangerous form of pollution,” said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District’s air pollution control officer and executive director.

During winter, wood burning is the largest single source of PM2.5, which is a harmful form of pollution that has been linked to chronic lung disease, respiratory illness, heart attacks and premature death. Residential wood burning can pump as much as 17 tons per day of this pollutant into the air basin.

A Valley-wide wood-burning curtailment results in air pollution reductions equivalent to taking 140,000 trucks off the road.

The number of wood-burning curtailments increased across the board this winter, even quadrupling, depending on the county. In Fresno County last winter, for example, there were 44 wood-burning curtailments – days when residential wood burning was prohibited. This winter, in contrast, Fresno County had 68 curtailment days.

Each day during the season, wood-burning forecasts are issued by county that determine if open-hearth fireplaces, wood-burning stoves or inserts, or pellet stoves can be used. Curtailments also apply to outdoor chimineas and fire pits. Violations of these prohibitions result in fines, although exemptions are available to residents for whom wood burning is their sole source of heat or if they have no access to natural gas.

2012 FOR Video REEL Contest

Healthy Air, Healthy You

Show us the lifestyle changes you make on a daily basis to help clean the Valley's air in a 30-second video for your chance to win an iPad2 and television air time for your video!



“Healthy Air, Healthy You” is the theme of the 2012 For Reel Video Contest, open to Valley students and their teachers. The Air District is seeking 30-second videos that illustrate a change for clean air, which could include walking or riding your bike to school, carpooling, using an electric lawn mower or another clean-air practice. In addition to an iPad2, the winner will have the thrill of having his or her video broadcast on local television!

Contest rules and an official entry form are available at www.healthyairliving.com. Deadline for entries is June 8. Mail them to:

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
 Attn: Outreach and Communications
 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave.,
 Fresno, CA 93726



County	Prohibitions 2011-12/2010-11	Notices of Violation 2011-12/2010-11
San Joaquin	29/7	88/9
Stanislaus	51/25	152/54
Merced	33/23	119/65
Madera	41/37	54/64
Fresno	68/44	239/74
Kings	49/36	31/16
Tulare	54/33	55/30
Kern (Valley portion)	56/40	89/36
Kern (Frazier Park)	0/0	0/0