

News Release

For immediate release

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For: local news and assignment editors



San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT



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Annual fireplace program begins Sunday

Check Before You Burn reduces winter particulate levels

The annual residential fireplace program that dramatically reduces harmful airborne particulates kicks off its new season Sunday.

Check Before You Burn, which runs from November through February each year, determines when residential wood burning will add dangerous levels of particulate matter – tiny pieces of soot, ash, dust and other materials – to the Valley’s air, and prohibits the use of residential wood-burning devices. Wood-burning forecasts are issued by county each day.

“This rule is an important measure to protect public health, and was integral in the Valley experiencing the cleanest winter on record last year,” said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District’s air pollution control officer and executive director.

High levels of particulate pollution can have serious health effects, including bronchitis, lung disease and increased risk for heart attacks and stroke. Young children, elderly people and people with existing respiratory and coronary disease are especially vulnerable.

There are two forecast levels -- “Wood burning Prohibited” and “Please Burn Cleanly” – depending on expected air quality. When a prohibition is declared, burning any solid fuel in a residential fireplace or wood-burning device is not permitted and violations may result in fines. Backyard chimineas and firepits are also subject to the prohibitions. There are two exceptions, however:

* If the residence does not have access to natural-gas service, even if propane is available; or

* If burning solid fuel is the sole source of heat for the residence.

When burning is allowed, the Air District recommends using manufactured fire logs such as Duraflame or dry, seasoned wood to minimize emissions.

Daily wood-burning forecasts will be available by county each day at 4:30 p.m. beginning

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Fireplace program begins Sunday

10-29-09

Page 2 of 2

Saturday at <http://www.valleyair.org/aqinfo/WoodBurnPage.htm>, by calling 1-800 SMOG INFO

(766-4463), or by subscribing to the Air District's daily air quality forecast at <http://www.valleyair.org/lists/list.htm>.

For more information about Check Before You Burn, call a District office in Fresno (559-230-6000), Modesto (209-557-6400) or Bakersfield (661-392-5500).