

News Release

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For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

TO:

**Local news, business, ag and
assignment editors; weather
sections**

North District Media Contact - Modesto
Anthony Presto
(209) 557-6400

Central District Media Contact - Fresno
Jaime Holt
(559) 230-6000

South District Media Contact - Bakersfield
Brenda Turner
(661) 326-6900

Thanksgiving fireplace ban for Kings County and Valley portion of Kern County Continuing poor air prompts fifth day of curtailments for Kings County

(Fresno) - The Valley Air District is prohibiting the use of wood-burning fireplaces, inserts and heating stoves on Thanksgiving Day in Kings County and the Valley portion of Kern County.

The curtailments, prompted by poor air quality, are in effect from midnight Wednesday to midnight Thursday. They may be extended on a day-to-day basis, depending on air-quality conditions. Violations of mandatory curtailments can result in fines.

Due to poor air quality expected throughout the Valley on Wednesday, residents of five additional counties of the air basin - Fresno, Tulare, Madera, Merced and Stanislaus - are asked to voluntarily refrain from using wood-burning heaters and fireplaces.

"It is important for people to remember that lighting up that fireplace over the holiday adds to air pollution and compounds already unhealthy air," said Tom Jordan, Special Projects Administrator for the Valley Air District.

Air quality in the Valley portion of Kern County and in Kings County is expected to reach 152 on the Air Quality Index. At that level, air quality is considered unhealthy for the general public and wood burning is prohibited. Stagnant air and poor dispersion have caused particulates to build up, making air quality poor.

When mandatory wood-burning curtailments are in place, Air District inspectors perform surveillance and investigate complaints. To report violations, residents may call the Air District during work hours and after-hours at:

- 1-800-281-7003 in San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties.
- 1-800-870-1037 in Madera, Fresno and Kings counties.
- 1-800-926-5550 in Tulare and the valley portion of Kern counties.

Mandatory curtailments do not apply to: devices that use natural gas or propane exclusively; homes that don't have connections to natural-gas service; homes in areas 3,000 feet or higher in elevation; homes in which no other heating device exists and wood-burning is the sole source of heat; and cooking devices.

The Check Before You Burn program, which runs Nov. 1 through Feb. 28, aims to reduce fall and wintertime air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley. The daily wood-burning status and air-quality forecast is issued on a county-wide basis and is available in English and Spanish toll-free at 1-800

SMOG INFO (1-800-766-4463) and at www.valleyair.org <<http://www.valleyair.org>>. Updates in Hmong are available toll-free at 1-877-344-1212.

When wood burning is allowed, it should be done as cleanly as possible, by using devices manufactured to meet the EPA's July 1990 emissions standards or pellet-fueled heaters, or by burning manufactured fire logs in open fireplaces. It is illegal to burn garbage or treated wood either in a fireplace or outdoors at any time. Additionally, the wood-burning curtailment program should not be confused with other Air District programs that regulate hazard-reduction burning, prescribed burning and agricultural burning.

The Valley Air District serves eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern. For assistance, contact the nearest District office in Modesto at (209) 557-6440, Fresno (559) 230-6000 or Bakersfield (661) 326-6900, or visit www.valleyair.org <<http://www.valleyair.org>>.

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