

News Release

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For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

TO:

Local News sections

Weather sections

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Air District prohibits wood burning in Fresno County Curtailment issued as air pollution levels climb

(Fresno, CA) – For the first time this season, the use of wood-burning fireplaces, inserts and heating stoves is prohibited in Fresno County. The mandatory curtailment is in effect from midnight Thursday to midnight Friday and, depending on air pollution levels, may be extended a day at a time.

The curtailment has been prompted by an air-quality forecast for Fresno County of 152 on the Air Quality Index. At that level, air quality is unhealthy for the general public. Stagnant air and poor dispersion have caused particulates to build up, making air quality poor.

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. When air quality is expected to be unhealthy for the general public, the Air District prohibits the use of wood-burning fireplaces, inserts and heating stoves. Tomorrow's curtailment is the first this season. Violations can result in fines.

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.

When air quality is expected to be unhealthy for sensitive groups, the public is asked to voluntarily refrain from using heating devices that burn solid fuels such as wood, pellets and manufactured firelogs. Voluntary curtailments are in effect midnight Thursday until midnight Friday in Madera, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern counties. No restrictions are being issued for San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties.

The daily wood-burning status 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. 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 firelogs 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.

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