

Valley Air News

A publication of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

3rd Quarter | 2003

Wood-burning restrictions are here No-light program to improve wintertime air quality

New wood-burning restrictions designed to improve air quality in the San Joaquin Valley went into effect on November 1st.

The Valley Air District's rule on wood-burning heaters and fireplaces was amended recently to include a mandatory no-light program for fall and winter days when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy.

One of three curtailment levels is in place as of November 1 and through February 28. At the first level, when air quality is forecast to be good or moderate, no restrictions will be in effect. At the second level, when air quality is expected to be unhealthy for sensitive groups, residents are asked to refrain from operating wood-burning heaters and fireplaces. If residents choose to burn, they should use pellet-fueled heaters, manufactured firelogs in open fireplaces, or EPA Phase II-certified devices. At the third level, when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy for the general public, burning wood, pellets or manufactured logs will be prohibited.

The curtailment levels will be determined on a county-by-county basis and likely will affect different counties between four and 25 days throughout the winter. Residents should check the fireplace/woodstove burning status daily at www.valleyair.org or 1-800-SMOG-INFO, which translates to: 1-800-766-4463. Violations of the mandatory no-light order can result in fines.

Natural gas and propane heating devices, as well as cooking devices, are exempt from the rule altogether. Additionally, the mandatory no-light order doesn't apply to homes that are 3,000 feet in elevation or higher; homes that don't have natural gas service; and homes in which wood burning is the sole source of heat.

Fall and wintertime air quality in the San Joaquin Valley is among the worst in the nation. Airborne particles reach unhealthy concentrations on too many days from November through February.

see Fireplaces on page 2

Burn status levels to watch for

Fireplace/ Woodstove

Air quality forecast:
good or moderate.

No wood-burning restrictions

Learn to burn clean at 1-800 SMOG INFO or www.valleyair.org.

Burning Status

Fireplace/ Woodstove

Air quality forecast:
unhealthy for sensitive groups.

Wood burning discouraged

Choose not to light midnight to midnight. Info: 1-800 SMOG INFO or www.valleyair.org.

Burning Status

Fireplace/ Woodstove

Air quality forecast:
unhealthy. Burning wood, pellets or manufactured logs is prohibited from midnight to midnight. 1-800 SMOG INFO.

Wood burning prohibited

Burning Status

Getting the facts straight on wood burning

Which devices:

The new requirements apply to any device that burns solid fuel, including wood, pellets and manufactured logs.

Which days:

When air quality is forecast to be good or moderate, no restrictions will be in effect. When air quality is expected to be unhealthy for sensitive groups, residents will be asked to voluntarily refrain from burning solid fuels. When air quality is forecast to be unhealthy for everyone, a mandatory no-light order will be issued.

Where:

The fireplace/woodstove burning status will be issued on a county-by-county basis throughout the San Joaquin Valley, and will depend on local air quality and meteorological conditions.

Get the daily status: Beginning Nov. 1 and continuing through the end of February, the fireplace/woodstove burning status will be issued daily to local news media and will be available at www.valleyair.org and 1-800-SMOG-INFO (1-800-766-4463).

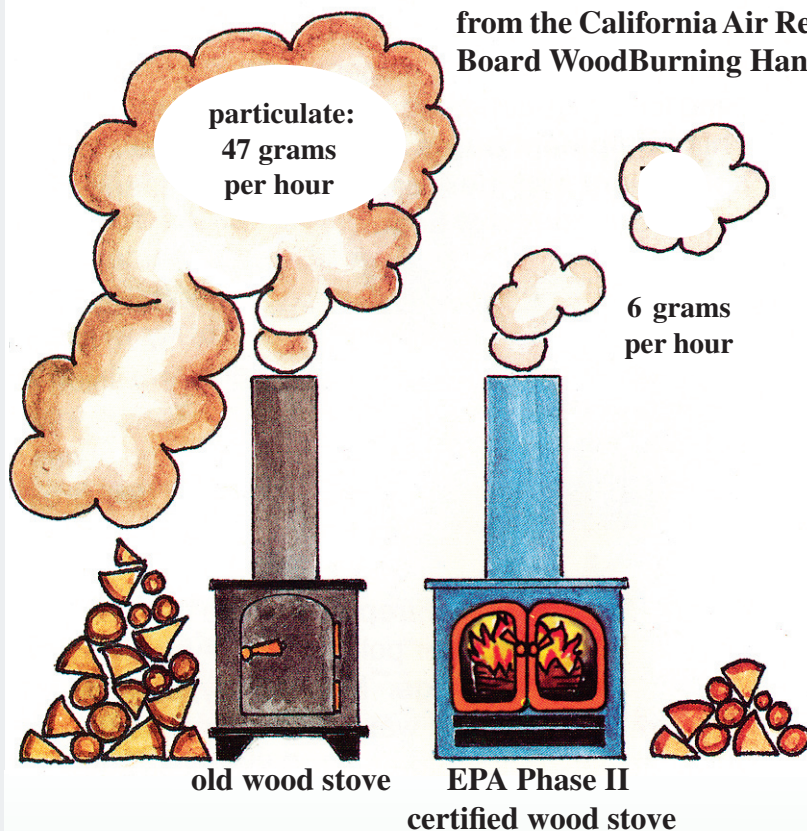
Complying: When a mandatory no-light order is in place, residents in the affected counties are prohibited from burning wood, pellets or manufactured logs from midnight to midnight. Violations can result in fines between \$50 and \$1,000. To report violations, call:

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

from the California Air Resources Board Wood Burning Handbook



Fireplaces *continued from page 1*

The tiny particles, which can get lodged deep in the lungs and cause serious health problems such as heart and lung ailments, are made up of microscopic fly ash, nitrates, salts, sulfates, dust, smoke and soot. During winter months, residential wood burning adds more than 24 tons per day of particulates to Valley air quality problems.

The amended fireplace and woodstove rule also includes a limit on the number of wood-burning devices allowed in new developments, as well as a change-out requirement to ensure wood-burning devices are as clean as possible prior to the transfer or sale of property. These components of the rule take effect January 1, 2004. These restrictions also don't apply to natural gas or propane devices.

For answers to commonly asked questions, visit www.valleyair.org or call 1-800-SMOG-INFO (1-800-766-4463).

Frequently asked questions about wood burning

Q: Are manufactured firelogs better than burning wood?

A: Independent tests demonstrate that depending on the content of the log, burning a manufactured firelog in an open fireplace can create less particulate matter pollution than burning certain types of wood. The moisture content, type of wood, duration of the fire and the amount of logs all affect emissions. Manufactured firelogs can be burned singly, while wood fires typically take multiple logs. Manufactured firelogs cannot be used in pellet stoves or wood-burning inserts, however, and they emit twice as much particulate matter per hour as burning a pellet stove or burning seasoned firewood in an EPA-certified stove or insert.

Q: Is there a big difference between newer wood burning devices and older ones?

A: The most efficient “solid-fuel” device is a pellet stove that emits from 1.2 to 1.0 grams per hour of particulate matter. A gas stove or insert emits .07 grams per hour. An open fireplace burning wood emits up to 60 grams per hour of particulate matter as opposed to a fireplace with an EPA-certified insert that emits 6 grams per hour of particulate matter.

Q: How do I know if my fireplace insert or stove is EPA-certified?

A: The EPA regulates woodstoves and fireplace inserts. A metal sticker on the back of the appliance bears the name of the United States Environmental Protection Agency with the year and month of manufacture.

Anything manufactured after July 1, 1992 is EPA-certified. There is also information at www.valleyair.org or epa.gov.

Q: What type of appliance should I purchase?

A: Gas fireplaces/heaters are the cleanest alternative. Of the solid fuel devices, pellet stoves are the most efficient and least polluting. EPA Phase II certified wood stoves are more efficient than open fireplaces or older wood stoves.

Q: If I do burn wood, what type is best?

A: Pound for pound, all woods have about the same heating value. However, firewood should always be seasoned. The dryer it is, the better.

Denser woods such as oak or orchard take longer to ignite, but burn slower and more evenly. Softwood used for kindling, such as pine or fir, are low in density, ignite easily, burn fast and hot and will heat the firebox and flue quickly. They produce more particulates than denser woods.

Board Meeting Highlights

For complete agendas and minutes, please visit the Valley Air District's web site at www.valleyair.org.

July

- The Board approved Rule 4901 (Wood-Burning Fireplaces and Wood-Burning Heaters): The rule imposes restrictions on the use and installation of wood burning fireplaces and stoves to reduce wintertime particulate matter pollution.

August

- The Governing Board accepted a recommendation from staff to postpone pursuing an extreme designation for the federal one-hour ozone standard to as late as January 2004.
- The Board adopted Rules 4305 and 4351 (Boilers, Steam Generators and Process Heaters). Rule 4306 was continued until September for further discussion.

September

- The Governing Board denied the proposal for a feasibility study of a separate air quality planning area for San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced Counties within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin.
- The Governing Board approved amendments to Rule 4306 (Internal Boilers, Steam Generators and Process Heaters - Phase 3) with stricter emission standards for some existing units.

October

- The Chair introduced and welcomed a new Governing Board Member, Councilmember Dan Prince, City of Ripon, Small City representative.
- Approved an additional \$1 motor vehicle surcharge fee on all applicable vehicles in the District. The additional \$2.4 million generated annually from this action will provide incentives for motor vehicle emission reduction programs.

Meeting Schedule

The next Governing Board meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2003. There is no meeting scheduled for November. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at 9 a.m. in the **Central Region Office**, 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, [559] 230-6000.

Governing Board meetings are also held via video teleconference in the offices below:

Northern Region Office, 4230 Kiernan Ave., #130, Modesto, [209] 557-6400

Southern Region Office, 2700 M St., Suite 275, Bakersfield, [661] 326-6900.

City of Madera adds natural gas vehicles



The Valley Air District is pleased to recognize the City of Madera for joining a growing list of communities such as Bakersfield, Clovis, Fresno, Hanford, Lodi, Riverbank and Tulare in converting their fleets to cleaner fuels. Madera now has 38 specialized vehicles that run on compressed natural gas (CNG), which creates significantly fewer smog-forming emissions than gasoline or diesel.

Not content to limit its CNG fleet to passenger vehicles, Madera also wanted to run utility, flatbed, crew cab and bucket-lift trucks using the fuel. That was a considerable challenge because these types of utility vehicles are not manufactured at the factory to run on CNG.

Madera asked area vehicle dealers to bid on this ambitious retrofit project. Larry Pistorosi, Fleet Sales Manager at Dubose Kopshever Chevrolet in Chowchilla, was the only one that took on the task of researching the options and helping Madera to purchase and retrofit the specialized vehicles. Mr. Pistorosi devoted many hours and much effort beyond the norm for fleet vehicle sales.

Since then, he has joined the City of Madera in advocating the air quality benefits of compressed natural gas as a viable, economic and cleaner alternative for municipal utility vehicles.

District reaches out to Hmong community

The Valley Air District has begun providing air quality education in the Hmong language. The District now issues information about ground-level ozone and particulate matter programs in English, Spanish and Hmong. The District's educational campaigns use media outlets throughout the Valley to inform residents about new rules, educate them about air pollution's health risks, and encourage participation in pollution reduction efforts.

"Reaching the Valley's 57,000-plus Hmong speakers with health and air quality education is a priority for the District," said Josette Merced Bello, public education administrator for the District.

"For example, wood smoke is a serious health problem in the Valley. With new wood-burning restrictions in place, we need to educate every community group about the problem. Education is the first step in getting everyone to become part of the solution."

The District has conducted outreach in English since forming in 1992. Spanish outreach was added in 1996 .

Outreach to the Hmong community began this fall with a full-color, pictorial calendar containing information about the wood burning and Spare the Air programs.

see Hmong Outreach on page 5

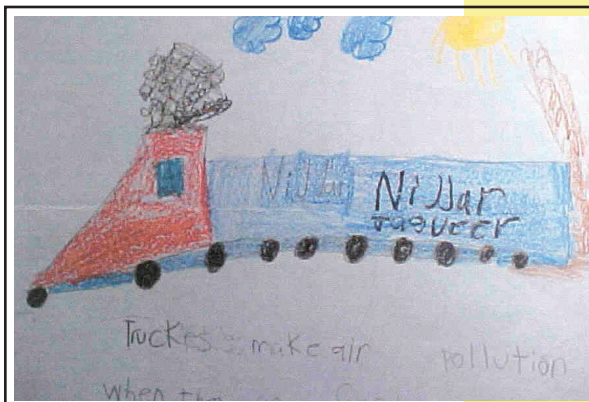
Hmong Outreach continued from page 4

The calendars will be distributed at Hmong New Year's celebrations throughout the Valley, community centers and retail establishments.

The calendars will also promote the District's new toll free phone line recorded in Hmong. The line is updated daily with air quality information, wood-burning restriction status in the winter months and Spare the Air information during the summer.

In addition to the calendars, the District is investing in Hmong advertising where available. In the Fresno area, KBIF radio also advises Hmong listeners on wood burning restrictions and Spare the Air information. Hmong Today, hosted by Ben Vue, on Fresno's KNXT-TV (channel 49) will provide more comprehensive education on District programs in a television talk show format.

Through this new education effort, The Valley Air District will be able to reach a large number of Valley residents who may not have received air quality information previously.



Jagueer Nijjar, a second-grader at Dixieland School in Madera, observed that "Trucks make air pollution when they go fast." His art and statement won first place in Room 4 in the recent Spare the Air coloring contest.

Spare the Air employer partner targets kids

Shirley Brimager thinks air quality education has its best chance with children.

That's why the Spare the Air Coordinator for Country Club Auto in Madera organizes annual activities such as the recent coloring contest for second-graders at Dixieland School in Madera.

"I like to target the kids because I feel the kids are the ones who will grow up with [air pollution awareness]," she explained.

"The adults are harder to train," she added with a smile. Not that the adults are excluded. Brimager made sure to bring along a cache of brochures, pens and other items to pass out to the parents.

Country Club Auto, an auto body repair and painting business, has been a Spare the Air Employer Partner since 1997 because, as Brimager put it, "We are concerned with the air quality in the Valley. It's bad."

Each year, the company devises a community-involvement strategy during the Spare the Air season from June through September. Last year's clean-air alternatives coloring contest at Dixieland School was so successful it was repeated this fall. In addition to \$25 in art supplies awarded the first-place students Eddie Avila and Jagueer Nijjar, Country Club also gave art supplies to the second-place winners and donated a \$50 Office Depot gift certificate to each of the two second-grade teachers, Miss Augustin and Miss Villareal.

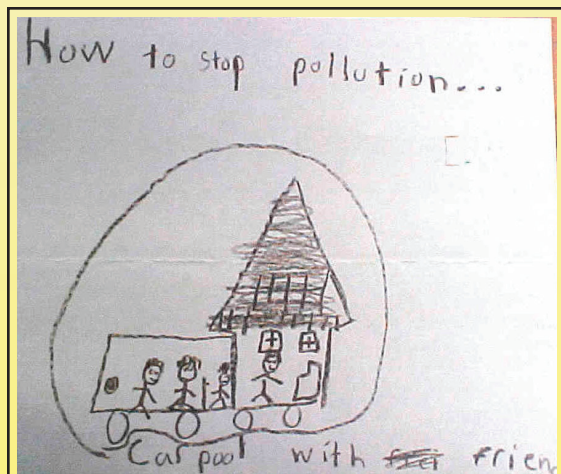
No one went away empty-handed: the Air District provided incentive items for each student in each class. "It helps the community," Brimager said of the company's efforts to further the Spare the Air message.

Country Club also makes sure its 11 employees are educated and informed. On Spare the Air Days, the company makes an extra effort to encourage compliance with air-sparing suggestions.

"We order pizza or bring in sodas, anything to help keep them from driving on their breaks," she said.

Being a high-profile Spare the Air Employer Partner sets Country Club Auto apart in the public's eyes, as well, but it's not the driving force behind the company's participation.

The greatest benefit is "just being involved in Spare the Air, showing that we are concerned and that we do participate," Brimager said.



Eddie Avila has the right idea with his poster proclaiming "How to stop pollution ... car pool with friends." The second-grader is Room 3's first-place winner at Dixieland School.

Valley Air District Directory

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

Smog Info Line [800] 766-4463
 Smoking Vehicle [800] 559-9247
 Job Line [559] 230-6019
 Valley Air District Web Site www.valleyair.org

Northern Region Office [209] 557-6400
 Complaint Line [800] 281-7003
 Small Business Assistance [209] 557-6446

Central Region Office [559] 230-6000
 Complaint Line [800] 870-1037
 Small Business Assistance [559] 230-5888

Southern Region Office [661] 326-6900
 Complaint Line [800] 926-5550
 Small Business Assistance [661] 326-6969

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Vice Chair

Supervisor Barbara Patrick, Kern County

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Clerk to the Boards

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