

News Release

For immediate release

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Attn: Local news, weather, health
& assignment editors



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Air officials declare season's first Valley-wide wood-burning ban *Air quality deteriorates in eight counties*

Deteriorating air quality has prompted the season's first Valley-wide wood-burning prohibition. The mandatory curtailments may continue, depending on air quality, Air District officials said.

The initial prohibition is in effect beginning at midnight today (Tuesday) and continuing through midnight Wed., Jan. 23 in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties (excluding Frazier Park). This prohibition applies to residential wood burning (including pellets and manufactured fire logs), and also applies to outdoor fire pits and chimineas.

Check Before You Burn runs each winter from November through February and reduces wintertime particulate matter (PM) by restricting the use of wood-burning devices when air quality is poor. PM includes small pieces of ash, soot, liquid droplets and other airborne matter, and causes lung infections, respiratory disease and cancer, and exacerbates cardiac disease, causing heart attacks and stroke.

Wood-burning forecasts are issued by county and there are two levels of forecast: "Wood Burning Prohibited" or "Please Burn Cleanly." When a prohibition is declared, burning any solid fuel in a residential fireplace or wood-burning device is not permitted.

There are two exceptions, however:

- If the residence does not have access to natural gas service, even if propane is used, or
- If burning solid fuel is the sole source of heat for the residence.

Prohibition violations are subject to fines.

Daily wood-burning forecasts are issued daily at 4:30 p.m. and available 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>.