

News Release

For immediate release
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Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors

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New Check Before You Burn season starts Nov. 1 Annual fireplace curtailment program keeps winter air cleaner

The annual residential fireplace-use regulation program that dramatically reduces harmful airborne particulate pollution begins its ninth season Tuesday, Nov. 1.

Check Before You Burn, which runs from November through February each winter, 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.

In fact, the past two winters have been the cleanest on record for the air basin. Additionally, the air basin has been declared in attainment of the larger form of particulate matter, PM10.

“The understanding and efforts of the Valley’s residents has made all the difference in this dramatic wintertime improvement,” said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District’s executive director and air pollution control officer.

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

There are two forecast levels, depending on air quality: “Wood burning Prohibited” and “Please Burn Cleanly.” 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 fire pits are also subject to the prohibitions. There are two exemptions:

- 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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Check Before You Burn begins Tuesday

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Monday 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>.

(Graphics for displaying the Check Before You Burn forecast are available at <http://www.valleyair.org/aqinfo/WoodBurnMedia.htm>.)