

News Release

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San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT



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Check Before You Burn ends eighth season *Winter air quality continues improvement*

The eighth season of an annual wintertime air quality program that limits dangerous airborne particulate matter concluded Feb. 28. Thanks to cooperation by Valley residents in complying with the regulation, wintertime air quality continued to improve.

Check Before You Burn runs from November through February each winter, and restricts the use of residential wood-burning devices when air quality deteriorates, in order to prevent the build-up of fine-particulate matter (PM2.5). During the season, wood-burning forecasts are issued each day, by county, which determine if open-hearth fireplaces, wood-burning stoves or inserts, or pellet stoves can be used. Tickets are issued for violations.

“This rule is one of our most important tools to keep the Valley’s air during winter as clean as possible,” said Seyed Sadredin, the District’s executive director and air pollution control officer. “Our cleaner winter air quality benefits all of us.”

During the 2010-11 season, there was a 44 percent decrease in the number of Unhealthy days (based on the Air Quality Index) over 2009-10. The number of days that exceeded the federal health standard for fine-particulate pollution also declined by 9 percent over last season.

This rule reduces fine particles, which have been linked to chronic lung disease, respiratory illness, heart attacks and premature death. Residential wood burning can put as much as 17 tons per day of this harmful matter into the eight-county air basin. Surveys have shown that 70 percent of fireplace use is for ambience rather than heating, although exemptions are available for residents who must burn solid fuel to heat their homes.

Since the rule’s adoption in 2003, other air basins throughout California have adopted similar regulations.

“The Valley continues to pioneer important regulations that are critical to protecting the public health and improving our quality of life,” said Sadredin.

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A detailed report recapping the most recent wood-burning season will be available at an upcoming public meeting.

County	Wood-burning prohibitions 2010-11 season	Notices of Violations (NOVs)
San Joaquin	7	9
Stanislaus	25	54
Merced	23	65
Madera	37	64
Fresno	44	174
Kings	36	16
Tulare	33	30
Kern (Valley portion)	40	36
Kern (Frazier Park)	0	0

For more information about the Check Before You Burn, visit www.valleyair.org. For information about the Valley Air District, call a regional office: in Fresno, 559-230-6000; in Bakersfield, 661-392-5500; and in Modesto, 209-557-6400.