

Check Before You Burn

The Valley's Check Before You Burn program aimed at reducing smoke from residential wood burning begins Sunday, November 1st

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"Wood smoke is one of the most dangerous pollutants that you can expose yourself, your children, and your neighbors to," said Seyed Sadredin, the District's executive director and air pollution control officer. "Prolonged exposure to wood smoke can lead to pulmonary arterial hypertension, pulmonary heart disease, heart failure and cancer."

Launching the 13th season of the Check Before You Burn program, Valley air district officials are encouraged by the tremendous embrace and support exhibited by Valley residents. "The cooperation and understanding of the Valley's residents has made this the single most cost-effective clean air strategy the Air District has adopted," said Sadredin.

Valley businesses, including farms and dairies have spent over \$40 billion on modernizing their facilities, installing clean air technologies, and complying with the toughest air regulations in the nation. As a result, air pollution from Valley businesses has been reduced by over 80% and currently smoke from residential wood burning constitutes the largest source of dangerous particulate emissions during winter months. "The Check Before You Burn program provides an opportunity for Valley residents to do their part to help reduce air pollution and improve public health throughout the San Joaquin Valley," said Sadredin.

During Check Before You Burn season, which runs November 1st through the end of February every year, the Air District issues a daily wood-burning status by county. To get the daily burn status, Valley residents may sign up for email notifications by visiting www.valleyair.org/CBYB. Daily wood-burning declarations are also available by calling 1-800-SMOG INFO (766-4463) or by downloading the free iPhone app "Valley Air" from the App Store. Additionally, the Air District is offering significant incentives to Valley residents wishing to change out their older units with new gas-fired or EPA-certified wood burning devices which are 20 to 50 times cleaner.

This year, under the revised Check Before You Burn program, Valley residents that have invested in cleaner, certified wood burning devices will be allowed to have additional burn days if they register their devices with the Air District. Valley residents wanting to switch out older wood-burning devices for a cleaner model can take advantage of the District's Burn Cleaner grants which provide \$1,000 for certified wood, pellet inserts, freestanding stoves or natural gas inserts or \$2,500 for eligible low-income applicants for all devices. An additional \$500 is available to all applicants for the installation costs on a natural gas device. To participate in this program please visit www.valleyair.org/burncleaner.

There are two exceptions to wood-burning prohibitions: If the residence does not have another source of heat or if the residence does not have access to natural-gas service (even if propane is used) then, they are exempt from the rule and may continue to use their device. Residents may get exemption information at www.valleyair.org/Rule4901. Additionally, fireplace inserts or stoves that run solely on gas or propane, and never burn wood, continue to be exempt from the rule. Wood-burning declarations also apply to outdoor devices and chimineas.