

## Valley air officials issue season's first wood-burning prohibitions

By Monica Velez

Merced Sun-Star, Friday, Nov. 4, 2016

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District issued its first wood-burning prohibitions of the season, advising residents of Merced County and nearly all of the rest of the Valley to curtail fireplace use Saturday.

The daylong prohibition bans the use of unregistered devices through midnight Saturday, the district said in a statement. The ban is in effect for the counties of Merced, Stanislaus, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and parts of Kern.

The announcement comes as the district kicked off its annual Check Before You Burn Program, which runs through February. The program gives residents a daily status report by county on whether restrictions on wood-burning are in effect because of air quality conditions. Restrictions apply to outdoor devices and chimneys, as well.

Natural gas and propane devices aren't included in the air district's wood-burning rules.

Wood-burning status corresponds with a daily air quality forecast depending on the levels of particulate matter, according to a statement from the air district. Particulate matter includes dust, ash, soot, smoke and fumes, according to the air district website.

The size of particulate matter is directly linked to potential health problems, said Anthony Presto, outreach and communication representative for the air district in an email to the Merced Sun-Star. The smaller the particle, the more damage it can do to public health. The particles can enter the lungs, triggering asthma, bronchitis and respiratory infections, or enter the bloodstream to increase risks of heart attacks and strokes.

"During winter, the largest source of particulate pollution comes from smoke from residential wood-burning, which is most detrimental to one's health," Presto said. "Check Before You Burn is a critical component of the air district's efforts to reduce wintertime particulate matter pollution."

Burn status information can be found at [www.valleyair.org/CBYB](http://www.valleyair.org/CBYB) or by calling 800-766-4463. The smartphone app, Valley Air, also can be downloaded.

Woodsmoke exposes residents to one of the most dangerous pollutants, Seyed Sadredin, executive director and air pollution control officer for the air district, said in a statement.

"Prolonged exposure to woodsmoke can lead to pulmonary arterial hypertension, pulmonary heart disease, heart failure and cancer," Sadredin said.

If residents wish to continue wood-burning, they can register for an Environmental Protection Agency-certified wood-burning stove/insert or a pellet-fueled heater. Having these devices allows people to burn wood more frequently.

The air district's Burn Cleaner Program assists Valley residents with the costs of replacing their older burning devices with one of the EPA-certified models. For an EPA-certified wood/pellet insert, freestanding stoves or natural gas inserts, the program offers \$1,000.

Eligible low-income applicants on all devices are offered up to \$2,500, and an additional \$500 is available to all applicants for the installation costs. Residents can apply at [www.valleyair.org/burncleaner](http://www.valleyair.org/burncleaner) or call 559-230-5800.

There are two exceptions to wood-burning prohibitions, according to a statement from the air district. If there is no other source of heat or access to a natural gas service, even if propane is used, they are exempt from restrictions. Exemption information can be found at [www.valleyair.org/Rule4901](http://www.valleyair.org/Rule4901).

## **Air district says don't burn wood Saturday in Valley**

By Andrea Figueroa Briseño

Fresno Bee and Modesto Bee, Friday, Nov. 4, 2016

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is banning wood burning in the Valley on Saturday except for registered devices.

Fresno, Madera, Kings, Tulare, Stanislaus, Merced counties and the Valley portion of Kern County are included in the mandatory curtailment.

The daylong curtailment will end at midnight and will prohibit the use of unregistered devices due to poor air quality. The use of manufactured fire logs, outdoor burning devices, chimneys, burning of wood and pellets in unregistered residential stoves and inserts is off limits.

Residences who use solid fuel as their main [only] source of heat or do not have access to natural-gas service are exempt from wood-burning prohibitions.

Check Before You Burn, a program overseen by the Valley's air pollution control district, operates during the winter season to reduce particle pollution by limiting the use wood burning. This pollution provokes respiratory illnesses, like asthma, lung infections and bronchitis.

To register your device visit [www.valleyair.org/cbybregistration](http://www.valleyair.org/cbybregistration).

Residents can visit [www.valleyair.org/CBYB](http://www.valleyair.org/CBYB) or call 1-800-766-4463 to find out the restrictions for their county.