

News Release

For immediate release

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For: local news and assignment editors

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First fireplace-use ban issued for Tulare County

Deteriorating air quality prohibits wood burning in Tulare County

The season's first fireplace and wood stove prohibition has been issued in Tulare County for Wednesday, November 4, 2009, because of deteriorating air quality. The daylong mandatory curtailment will be in effect from midnight November 4 through midnight November 5. Other counties under mandatory wood burning curtailment within the Valley for November 4 are Kings and the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin portion of Kern counties.

The curtailment applies to burning wood, pellets and manufactured firelogs, and is the first ban of the season. The wood-burning curtailment program, Check Before You Burn, runs each year from Nov. 1 through the last day of February and aims to reduce wintertime particulate pollution by restricting the use of wood-burning devices when air quality is forecast to deteriorate. Forecasts are issued on a county-by-county basis.

Residential wood burning pumps dangerous particulate matter (PM) into Valley skies. PM has been shown to cause bronchial infections, exacerbate respiratory and cardiac illness.

There are two levels of wood-burning forecast: "Wood burning Prohibited" or "Please Burn Cleanly," depending on expected air quality.

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 available; or

* If burning solid fuel is the sole source of heat for the residence.

Prohibition violations may be subject to fines.

Daily wood-burning forecasts are available each day at 4:30 p.m. at <http://www.valleyair.org/airinfo/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>. For more information about Check Before You Burn, call a

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