

# News Release

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

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## **First fireplace ban of season in Merced, Madera counties** *Curtailments also in Stanislaus, Fresno, Kings and Tulare counties*

Poor air quality has prompted Valley Air District officials to declare wood-burning prohibitions in six Valley counties Tuesday, Nov. 15, including the first prohibitions of the 2011-12 season in **Merced and Madera counties**.

The daylong, mandatory curtailment in **Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings and Tulare counties** will be in place from midnight Monday (Nov. 14) through midnight Tuesday (Nov. 15).

The curtailment applies to burning wood, pellets and manufactured fire logs. Outside wood-burning devices including fire pits and chimineas are also prohibited from use.

Check Before You Burn, which runs each winter from November through February, reduces wintertime particulate pollution by restricting the use of wood-burning devices when air quality is poor. Wood burning pumps dangerous particulate matter into Valley skies. It has been shown to cause lung infections and exacerbate respiratory and cardiac illness.

There are two levels of wood-burning forecast: "Wood Burning Prohibited" or "Please Burn Cleanly." 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 used, or
- If burning solid fuel is the sole source of heat for the residence.

Prohibition violations are subject to fines.

Daily wood-burning forecasts are available at 4:30p.m. each day 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>.