

News Release

11-22-2005

For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

TO:

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assignment editors; weather
sections**

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Fireplace ban continues in Kings County and Valley portion of Kern County

Continuing poor air prompts third day of curtailments for Kings County

(Fresno) - The Valley Air District continues to prohibit the use of wood-burning fireplaces, inserts and heating stoves on Wednesday in Kings County and the Valley portion of Kern County.

The curtailments, prompted by poor air quality, are in effect from midnight Tuesday to midnight Wednesday. They may be extended on a day-to-day basis, depending on air-quality conditions. Violations of mandatory curtailments can result in fines.

Due to poor air quality expected throughout the Valley on Wednesday, residents of six additional counties of the air basin - Fresno, Tulare, Madera, Merced and Stanislaus - are asked to voluntarily refrain from using wood-burning heaters and fireplaces.

"As the air-quality conditions continue to worsen, residents in the Valley need to make conscious efforts to refrain from using their wood stoves and fireplaces. It is a public health issue that touches everyone," said Seyed Sadredin, Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer for the Valley Air District.

Air quality in the Valley portion of Kern County and in Kings County is expected to reach 152 on the Air Quality Index. At that level, air quality is considered unhealthy for the general public and wood burning is prohibited. Stagnant air and poor dispersion have caused particulates to build up, making air quality poor.

When mandatory wood-burning curtailments are in place, Air District inspectors perform surveillance and investigate complaints. To report violations, residents may call the Air District during work hours and after-hours at:

- 1-800-281-7003 in San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties.
- 1-800-870-1037 in Madera, Fresno and Kings counties.
- 1-800-926-5550 in Tulare and the valley portion of Kern counties.

Mandatory curtailments do not apply to: devices that use natural gas or propane exclusively; homes that don't have connections to natural-gas service; homes in areas 3,000 feet or higher in elevation; homes in which no other heating device exists and wood-burning is the sole source of heat; and cooking devices.

The Check Before You Burn program, which runs Nov. 1 through Feb. 28, aims to reduce fall and wintertime air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley. The daily wood-burning status and air-quality forecast is issued on a county-wide basis and is available in English and Spanish toll-free at 1-800

SMOG INFO (1-800-766-4463) and at www.valleyair.org <<http://www.valleyair.org>>. Updates in Hmong are available toll-free at 1-877-344-1212.

When wood burning is allowed, it should be done as cleanly as possible, by using devices manufactured to meet the EPA's July 1990 emissions standards or pellet-fueled heaters, or by burning manufactured firelogs in open fireplaces. It is illegal to burn garbage or treated wood either in a fireplace or outdoors at any time. Additionally, the wood-burning curtailment program should not be confused with other Air District programs that regulate hazard-reduction burning, prescribed burning and agricultural burning.

The Valley Air District serves eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern. For assistance, contact the nearest District office in Modesto at (209) 557-6440, Fresno (559) 230-6000 or Bakersfield (661) 326-6900, or visit www.valleyair.org <<http://www.valleyair.org>>.

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