

VALLEY AIR NEWS

Residents help reduce pm pollution in some counties

A dramatic 50 percent reduction in the number of wood-burning curtailment days in Fresno County marked the fifth year of the Valley Air District's "Check Before You Burn" program.

The 2007-08 season ended Friday, Feb. 29. The annual program to reduce wintertime air pollution by restricting residential wood burning runs each year from Nov. 1 through the end of February.

This year, Fresno County had half the wood-burning prohibition declarations of last season. And in Stanislaus County, just one curtailment day was declared, compared to nine last season.

"We applaud the Valley's residents and businesses for understanding the problem of wintertime air pollution and taking steps to minimize it," said Seyed Sadredin, the district's executive director.

Wood-burning fireplaces and woodstoves can generate up to one-third of all particulate matter pollution on unhealthy air days in the winter (151 and above on the Air Quality Index). Check Before You Burn prohibits burning solid fuel on those days. Wood burning is discouraged when air quality is projected to be unhealthy for sensitive groups (101-150 on the AQI).

When wood burning is prohibited, violators may receive a Notice of Violation and be subject to fines beginning at \$50.

The restrictions on residential wood burning do not apply to natural gas or propane devices; homes and businesses in areas with no natural-gas service; homes and businesses at elevations of 3,000 feet or higher; and homes in which no other heating device exists and wood-burning is the sole source of heat.

County	Prohibited days 2007-08 [06-07]	Notices of Violation	Discouraged days 2007-08 [06-07]
Fresno	6 [12]	40 [101]	34 [48]
Kern (Valley only)	12 [8]	13 [23]	30 [50]
Kings	4 [2]	0 [0]	15 [27]
Madera	3 [2]	17 [4]	9 [33]
Merced	0 [2]	0 [5]	6 [36]
San Joaquin	0 [1]	0 [9]	6 [22]
Stanislaus	1 [9]	16 [60]	6 [33]
Tulare	4 [3]	1 [1]	28 [42]

We can all live a healthy air life

by Seyed Sadredin, Air Pollution Control Officer

Doing the right thing can have tangible rewards. And in the case of the Valley's air pollution, doing the right thing can put a new hybrid automobile in your garage.

The Valley Air District is rolling out the most sweeping initiative in its history, Healthy Air Living. This comprehensive, year-round, multi-faceted program involves every sector of the Valley's population. It's a new collaboration with every Valley resident, business and organization, and its goal is simple: to improve the health and quality of life of all Valley residents through strategies that clean up our air.

One facet of Healthy Air Living is a week-long, intensive focus on alternatives to the things we do that produce emissions during July 7-13 (hence, the opportunity to win the aforementioned vehicle). More details on Healthy Air Living Week will be forthcoming this spring.

The Valley's tough air-quality challenges, which are a surprise to no one, present an opportunity for all of us to shine. Collectively, we can take the Valley to a place where our ingenuity, creativity and hard work on cleaning our air will be a source of genuine pride for all of us. We are already well on our way, as many other regions are looking at Valley strategies, including pioneering rules as a model for their air basins.

With Healthy Air Living, our goal is to make air quality a real priority in the day-to-day decision-making process for all individuals and businesses. The good news is that much can be accomplished through "win-win" voluntary measures that help individuals and businesses save money and reduce air pollution.

In advancing Healthy Air Living, we need help from every individual, business and municipality in the Valley. Businesses have already invested great sums of money in applying clean-air technologies and will continue to be major partners in this new initiative.

But to achieve the success we know is possible, we need to build strong alliances with some new participants, such as faith-based organizations. This natural overlap with good stewardship of the Earth and caring about air quality has exciting potential.

Individuals can also put Healthy Air Living tips to work in their daily lives at home. Some of these – foregoing the use of aerosols or using a clean, electric lawnmower in place of a gas-powered mower – may be familiar through the long-running Spare the Air program, which has been absorbed into Healthy Air Living.

The Valley Air District is hosting three, free, one-day Healthy Air Living summits during the last week in March in each region of the air basin:

- March 25, in Bakersfield, at the Holiday Inn Select Hotel and Convention Center;
- March 26, in Fresno, at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center; and
- March 27 in Modesto, at the Doubletree Hotel.

Registration materials and additional information is available at www.valleyair.org

We can absolutely make dramatic improvements in our air quality, years ahead of schedule. But it requires all of us to embrace this initiative and live a healthy air life!