

# VALLEY AIR NEWS



A monthly publication of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District - March 2013

## Wood-burning season ends with fewer bans, improved air quality

The annual wintertime program that reduces dangerous particle pollution ended its 10th season Feb. 28. During the 2012-13 season, there were 187 curtailments District-wide. This compares to 381 curtailments during the 2011-12 season, representing a decrease in curtailment days of over 50 percent from last season. (For curtailments by county, see chart at right.)

There were just three days during this winter when air quality was “unhealthy” in any county, compared to 41 such days last winter. Also, the number of days when air quality was rated “unhealthy for sensitive groups” decreased by 54 percent over last winter.

“We owe a great deal of gratitude to Valley residents for their cooperation and the resulting improvements in air quality,” said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District’s executive director and air pollution control officer.

The Check Before You Burn program, which curtails residential wood burning when air quality deteriorates in order to prevent build-up of fine-particulate matter (PM2.5), is the

County	Prohibitions 2012-13/2011-12	Notices of Violation 2012-13/2011-12
San Joaquin	21 [29]	84 [88]
Stanislaus	28 [51]	69 [152]
Merced	2 [33]	2 [119]
Madera	6 [41]	24 [54]
Fresno	43 [68]	128 [239]
Kings	27 [49]	6 [31]
Tulare	24 [54]	19 [55]
Kern (Valley portion)	36 [56]	28 [89]

District’s single most-successful and cost-effective regulation. Since it was adopted in 2003, the air basin has seen dramatic improvements to winter air quality, when residential wood burning is the largest single source of PM2.5.

PM2.5 – small particles of soot, ash and other airborne material – is a harmful form of air pollution that is linked to chronic lung disease, respiratory illness, heart attacks and premature death. One Valley-wide curtailment results in air-pollution reductions equivalent to taking 140,000 trucks off the road.

“Over the past 10 years, Valley residents have come to understand the serious health consequences of residential wood burning and support this critical regulation,” Sadredin said. “Our improving winter air quality reflects that.”

The residential wood-burning rule (Rule 4901) was strengthened in 2008. As part of the District’s recently adopted 2012 PM2.5 plan, the rule will once again be tightened to enable the air basin to attain this important standard while providing additional burn days for Valley residents with cleaner EPA-certified wood stoves. District staff is beginning an exhaustive process to develop this amended rule, including public workshops and aggressive outreach seeking input from Valley residents.

The District issues daily air quality forecasts for each of the air basin’s eight counties with wood burning declarations taking effect at midnight for the following day. Forecasts are derived by analyzing meteorology, expected emissions, atmospheric patterns and other variables.

Forecasts are available by calling the toll-free forecast number, 1-800 SMOG INFO (466-7763), visiting [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org), [healthyairliving.com](http://healthyairliving.com) and the District’s free iPhone app (“valley air”) available through the iPhone App Store and iTunes.



## HEALTHY AIR LIVING SCHOOLS

A key component of the Air District’s overall outreach strategy is air-quality education for children.

The District is partnering with the Central California Asthma Collaborative, asthma coalitions and school-based medical professionals throughout the Valley to train school administrators, educators, students and parents to understand the health implications, risks and recommended protective measures associated with air-quality flags and real-time air quality notifications.

Healthy Air Living Schools stresses an anti-idling message at Valley school sites in addition to air quality flag placement and RAAN (Real-time Air Advisory Network) notifications.

Its also free to any public or private school in the Valley. The District has developed brochures, posters and signs to reinforce the key message that idling a vehicle is a preventable pollution source and endangers student health. Signs are being placed near student drop-off and pick-up points.

More information is available about this program by visiting: [http://www.valleyair.org/Programs/FlagProgram/AirQualityFlagProgram\\_idx.htm](http://www.valleyair.org/Programs/FlagProgram/AirQualityFlagProgram_idx.htm).