

Newsletter Articles

ARTICLE 1

To Burn or Not to Burn – Time to Check

It's the season to Check Before You Burn! From November 1 through the end of February, residents and businesses in Sacramento County and the cities of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Rancho Cordova and Sacramento must check the daily burn status before using a wood burning fireplace or other wood burning device. This is due to the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District's (AQMD) Check Before You Burn law.

No Burn days are called when weather conditions trap wood smoke near the ground. To protect public health and achieve federal air quality standards, it's illegal to burn wood, pellets, manufactured logs or any other solid fuel when fine particle pollution (PM2.5) is forecast to be high. This applies to indoor or outdoor fireplaces, wood stoves, fire pits and chimineas.

Here's how to Check Before You Burn:

1. Call 1-877-NO-BURN-5 (1-877-662-8765)
2. Follow on Twitter @AQMD
3. Visit www.AirQuality.org
4. Download the free Sacramento Region Air Quality app
5. Sign up to get a daily Air Alert email at www.SpareTheAir.com – input your Sacramento County zip code and check the "Daily Air Quality Forecast" box
6. Read The Sacramento Bee's weather page

ARTICLE 2

Air Pollution Doesn't Take a Holiday

Wood burning during the winter causes over 50 percent of the fine particle pollution (PM2.5) in Sacramento County and air pollution doesn't take a holiday. This holiday season, make sure you Check Before You Burn to confirm that it's legal to burn. Call 1-877-NO-BURN-5 (1-877-662-8765). If weather conditions trap pollution close to the ground and there's no wind or rain, then wood burning could be restricted or prohibited. We don't want to be Scrooge or the Grinch, but PM2.5 is unhealthy to breathe for you, your family, friends and neighbors.

PM2.5 may contain soot, smoke, metals, nitrates, sulfates and dust. These invisible particles are so small they can enter the bloodstream. Breathing wood smoke is especially harmful for children whose lungs are still developing, older adults and anyone with a pre-existing heart or lung condition.

Long-term exposure can cause serious health problems, including:

- Decreased lung function
- Aggravated asthma
- Development of chronic respiratory disease in children
- Irregular heartbeat
- Nonfatal heart attacks
- Premature death in people with heart or lung disease
- Increased susceptibility to heart and vascular disease for post-menopausal women
- Reduced blood clotting ability

The Sac Metro Air District enforces No Burn days through sightings of visible smoke by enforcement staff. Inspectors respond to complaints and conduct surveillance. No one comes to your door. Typically, a photo is taken to document visible smoke and a notice of penalty and violation letter is mailed to the address where the violation was observed. First time violations will result in a \$50 fine, or you may take and pass a wood smoke awareness exam. Fines for subsequent violations are higher.

To report a complaint or a suspected violation, call the Sac Metro Air District at 1-800-880-9025.

Visit www.AirQuality.org to learn more.

ARTICLE 3

5 Reasons Not to Burn

From November through February, the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (Sac Metro Air District) law, Check Before You Burn, restricts or prohibits wood burning in Sacramento County and the cities of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Rancho Cordova and Sacramento when fine particle pollution (PM2.5) is forecast to be high. The purpose is to reduce the harmful emissions from wood and other solid fuel burning to protect public health and achieve federal air quality standards. Everyone breathes unhealthy air when weather conditions trap pollution close to the ground.

Here are five reasons not to burn wood:

1. Particles from wood smoke trigger asthma attacks and impact the heart and lungs.
2. Wood smoke presents a significant health risk for older adults and the elderly.
3. Children are more likely to suffer health effects from breathing wood smoke because their lungs are still developing.
4. Smoke from chimneys can re-enter your home or your neighbor's home even when doors and windows are closed.
5. Particles from wood smoke contain toxics that can stay in your lungs for months, causing changes that lead to diseases and permanent damage.



To get the daily burn forecast or learn more, visit www.AirQuality.org. You may also get the forecast by downloading the free Sacramento Region Air Quality app or calling 1-877-NO-BURN-5 (1-877-662-8765).

The Sac Metro Air District offers vouchers for up to \$1,500 towards the cost of replacing an old wood stove or fireplace with a new, cleaner-burning device for low-income residents who qualify. This offer is only available to eligible residents of Sacramento County and the cities of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Rancho Cordova and Sacramento. The voucher amount depends on what you're replacing and what new device you wish to install.

To find out if you qualify, visit <http://www.airquality.org/Residents/Fireplaces-Wood-Stoves>, call 916-440-WOOD (9663), or send an email to woodstove@airquality.org.

ARTICLE 4



Tips for a Warmer Winter

Winter is here and it's chilly outside! We all want our homes to be cozy by keeping the heat in and the cold out. But, in a quest to save money by not cranking up the thermostat, you could be using an old wood burning fireplace, which is bad for your health. Did you know that wood smoke consists of small

particles called Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5)? The smoke coming from wood burning enters your home and the homes of your neighbors, which can trigger asthma attacks and other heart or lung problems.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District reminds you to Check Before You Burn to make sure it's a legal to burn day and follow these tips to keep warm this winter:

1. Bundle up. Your body temperature can change much faster than a room's temperature. Instead of lighting a fire, put on another layer of clothing, whether it's a sweatshirt, scarf or hat.
2. Break out the pool noodles. Yes, that's right. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, drafts can equal five to 30 percent of your energy use. Use a pool noodle to block drafts by cutting it in half lengthwise, wrapping it in fabric and sliding it under your door. It will stay put and keep you warmer all winter long!
3. Be a fan of your ceiling fan. Warm air rises, so run your fan on its lowest setting clockwise to push the warm air back down. This can reduce heating costs by 10 percent.

To Check Before You Burn, call 1-877-NO-BURN-5 (1-877-662-8765) or visit www.AirQuality.org.