

News Release

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For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

TO:

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Fourth Check Before You Burn season ends **Number of restrictions down in some counties**

Fresno, CA – Fewer wood-burning curtailment days in some counties marked the fourth year of the Valley Air District's "Check Before You Burn" program.

The 2006-07 season ends Wednesday. The annual program to reduce wintertime air pollution by restricting residential wood burning runs each year from Nov. 1 through the end of February. The season-ending wood-burning status issued for Wednesday will be in effect until midnight. There are no restrictions for Feb. 28.

This year, Kern County had half as many days when lighting wood-burning fireplaces or stoves was prohibited as in the previous season – eight, compared to 16 in 2005-06. Kings County had just two prohibited days, compared with 13 in 2005-06, and Tulare County recorded three days of fireplace and woodstove prohibitions, down from nine last year.

Madera (2), Merced (2) and San Joaquin (1) counties each logged the same number of curtailments as last season.

Fresno County had 12 curtailment days this year, compared to 11 in 2005-06.

"For the past three years, the District has made great progress in reducing winter-time air pollution and we are now in attainment for the harmful pollutant PM 10 (particulate matter 10 microns and smaller). We give a lot of the credit for reaching attainment to the fireplace rule and the excellent response by residents," said Executive Director Seyed Sadredin.

The number of curtailment days in Stanislaus County rose to nine, up from three in 2005-06.

"With the addition in Turlock of a real-time monitor for PM 2.5 (particulate matter 2.5 microns and smaller), the District was able to get more accurate air quality information about that area than in previous years," said Shawn Ferreria, an atmospheric scientist at the District.

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).

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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.

This year, the Air District also is assisting residents in changing out their old, polluting wood-burning stoves and inserts with sizeable discounts toward the purchase of new, cleaner burning wood-burning or gas units.

Through the Burn Cleaner program, sponsored by the District and Operation Clean Air, residents may receive a voucher good for hundreds of dollars off new units from participating retailers. Voucher applications are available in District offices or online at www.valleyair.org until March 15. To date, more than \$75,000 in vouchers has been granted. The District expects to change out between 400-700 old devices.

Newer units produce about one-tenth the pollution of older wood-burning models.

The Valley Air District covers eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern. For more information, visit www.valleyair.org. Or, call the nearest District office: Modesto (209) 557-6400, Fresno (559) 230-6000 and Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.

County	Mandatory Curtailments (Wood-Burning Prohibited) 2006-07 season ['05-06]	Notices of Violation (NOVs)	Voluntary Curtailments (Wood-Burning Discouraged)
Fresno	12 [11]	82 [71]	48 [34]
Kern (Valley only)	8 [16]	19 [35]	50 [19]
Kings	2 [13]	0 [7]	27 [23]
Madera	2 [2]	4 [1]	33 [28]
Merced	2 [2]	5 [0]	36 [22]
San Joaquin	1 [1]	9 [9]	22 [14]
Stanislaus	9 [3]	43 [16]	33 [20]
Tulare	3 [9]	1 [20]	42 [28]

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