



Southwest Clean Air Agency

11815 NE 99th Street, Suite 1294 • Vancouver, WA 98682-2322
(360) 574-3058 • Fax: (360) 576-0925
www.swcleanair.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Agency Partnership Facilitates Cooperation on Burning Issues

VANCOUVER, Wash. – A multi-agency collaboration of local fire marshals, fire chiefs, Washington Department of Natural Resources and the Southwest Clean Air Agency has coordinated to improve response to illegal burning in Clark and Cowlitz Counties. The workgroup also established new guidelines to improve fire safety and public education.

One significant outcome from the workgroup is a fixed fire safety burn ban, July 15 through September 30 each year, when outdoor burning is prohibited throughout Clark and Cowlitz counties. This fire safety burn ban prohibits residential and land clearing burning throughout each county, even outside of the permanent No Burn Areas. The fire safety burn ban may extend beyond these dates based on fire danger conditions.

"The pre-designated no-burn season, combined with an aggressive complaint and enforcement program, help ensure clean air, good health, and reduced fire danger for everyone," said Donovan Mattern of Clark County Fire District 3. "I think people need to understand the reason enforcement and fire protection agencies have united is to ensure that everyone can enjoy clean air and that people in certain rural areas can still burn yard debris with limited fire danger. The burning rules exist to protect the health and safety of everyone."

"In addition, complaint response and enforcement activities have been improved across the board," said Bob Elliott, executive director for the Southwest Clean Air Agency (SWCAA). Residents can now file air pollution complaints any time of day or night by calling 360-574-3058 or online at www.swcleanair.org. If you file a complaint or report illegal burning with SWCAA, staff will follow up

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with you as soon as possible during normal business hours to discuss the problem, respond appropriately and pursue possible solutions. The Southwest Clean Air Agency may also issue citations that can result in civil penalties for anyone burning illegally or otherwise violating air pollution laws.

Washington's Clean Air Act (RCW 70.94.743) prohibits outdoor burning in all urban growth areas and adjacent high density areas throughout Washington. Consequently, as urban growth areas expand, so do their corresponding permanent no-burn areas. State law also prohibits the use of burn barrels and garbage burning throughout the state of Washington.

SWCAA encourages residents to explore their alternatives to outdoor burning, such as arranging for yard debris pick-up service, composting, chipping or recycling yard debris.

"Smoke generated from outdoor burning is a health hazard and a public nuisance," says Elliott. Particularly at risk to the effects of smoke are children, the elderly and those with asthma, heart disease or other respiratory ailments.

The mission of the Southwest Clean Air Agency, founded in 1968, is to preserve and enhance the air quality in southwest Washington. Serving the counties of Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum, SWCAA is responsible for protecting the public's health through the enforcement of federal, state and local air quality standards and regulations.

For any outdoor burning questions or complaints, please call the Southwest Clean Air Agency at 360-574-3058, or visit us online at www.swcleanair.org.

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For more information contact:

Robert Elliott
Executive Director
Southwest Clean Air Agency
360-574-3058, ext. 12
bob@swcleanair.org

Kathy Finkle
Public Information Specialist
Southwest Clean Air Agency
360-574-3058, ext. 39
kathy@swcleanair.org

Also sent to:

The Columbian
The Reflector
Camas-Washougal Post-Record
The Daily News
The Chronicle
All Lewis County Fire Districts (below)

Chief Walkowski
Centralia Fire Department
512 N. Pearl
Centralia, WA 98531

Chief Gebhart
Chehalis Fire Department
455 NW Park
Chehalis, WA 98532

Chief Powell
Morton Fire Department
P.O. Box 1089
Morton, WA 98356

Chief Allebaugh
Lewis County Fire District 1
P.O. Box 100
Onalaska, WA 98570

Chief Wiltbank
Lewis County Fire District 2
P.O. Box 309
Toledo, WA 98591

Chief Hadaller
Lewis County Fire District 3
P.O. Box 127
Mossyrock, WA 98564

Chief Weiland
Lewis County Fire District 5
P.O. Box 259
Napavine, WA 98565

Chief Goodwillie
Lewis County Fire District 6
2123 Jackson Hwy.
Chehalis, WA 98532

Chief Dobbins
Lewis County Fire District 7
P.O. Box 194
Vader, WA 98593

Chief McDaniel
Lewis County Fire District 8
P.O. Box 8
Salkum, WA 98582

Chief Mounce
Lewis County Fire District 9
P.O. Box 155
Mineral, WA 98355

Chief Goble
Lewis County Fire District 10
P.O. Box 270
Packwood, WA 98361

Chief Krafczyk
Lewis County Fire District 11
205 McCormick Creek Rd.
Pe Ell, WA 98572

Chief Walkowski
Lewis County Fire District 12
1818 Harrison Ave.
Centralia, WA 98531-1905

Chief Panush
Lewis County Fire District 13
P.O. Box 16
Curtis, WA 98538

Chief Jaques
Lewis County Fire District 14
P.O. Box 127
Randle, WA 98377

Chief Hensley
Lewis County Fire District 15
P.O. Box 708
Winlock, WA 98596-0708

Chief Elliott
Lewis County Fire District 16
177 Chandler Rd.
Chehalis, WA 98532

Chief Farcy
Lewis County Fire District 17
P.O. Box 171
Ashford, WA 98304

Chief Matchett
Lewis County Fire District 18
P.O. Box 218
Glenoma, WA 98336