

Stage 1 Burn Ban Being Declared for Clark County

The use of fireplaces and uncertified wood stoves will be prohibited until air quality improves. Households without an alternative heat source are exempted.

VANCOUVER, Wash. – The Southwest Clean Air Agency (SWCAA) is issuing a Stage 1 Burn Ban effective at 5:00 p.m. Friday, December 2, 2011 for all of Clark County. Fine particle pollution levels rose quickly Thursday night into Friday morning due to stagnant weather patterns. Evening inversions followed by poor daytime ventilation and dispersion is forecasted to continue for the upcoming weekend, and into next week. This stagnant weather pattern means that the use of all fireplaces, uncertified wood stoves and inserts is prohibited until air quality improves and the Stage 1 Burn Ban is lifted. All outdoor burning is also prohibited during this Stage 1 Burn Ban, which will remain in place until further notice. If air quality continues to deteriorate, this Burn Ban may have to be upgraded to a Stage 2, which would prohibit **all** wood burning, including fireplaces, certified wood stoves, inserts and pellet stoves. **If wood burning is your sole source of heat, you are exempt and we ask that you burn as clean as possible.**

These curtailments occur in two progressive stages as needed:

Stage 1: The use of all fireplaces and uncertified wood stoves and inserts is banned when pollution is forecasted to reach unhealthy levels. Uncertified units are typically older than 1990 and lack a certification label on the back of the unit.

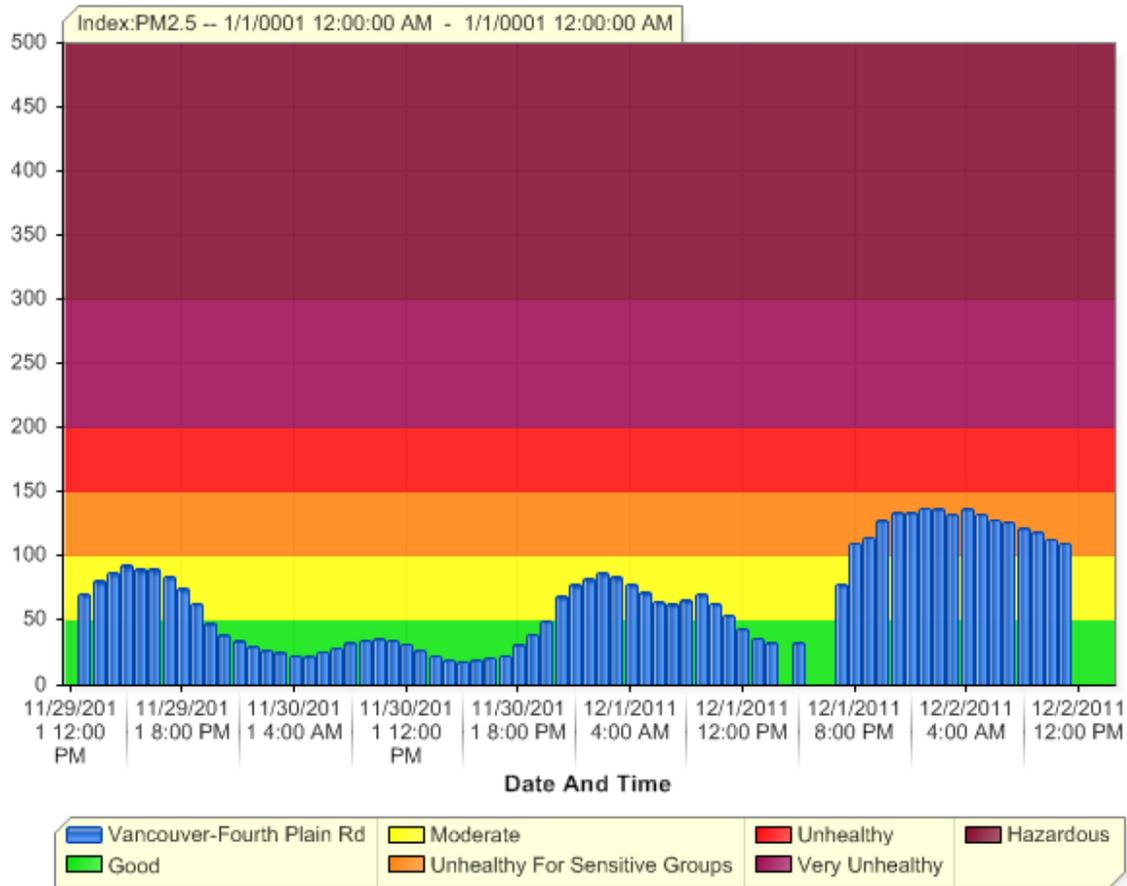
Stage 2: All wood heating is prohibited, including certified units, when the Stage 1 curtailment has not reversed the increasing pollution trend and weather conditions still indicate a high risk for exceeding air quality health standards.

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“We are hopeful that calling this Stage 1 curtailment will prevent us from exceeding the federal health-based standard for fine particle pollution,” said Brian Fallon, Air Quality Specialist for the agency. Fallon went on to say that “although we may see these fine particle pollution levels decreasing some during the day, on cold nights with little or no wind, wood smoke pollution can accumulate to levels that are considered unhealthy. Fine particles released by smoke from wood stoves, fireplaces and other burning are of concern because they can reach deep into the lungs. Episodes of high fine particle pollution can trigger asthma attacks, cause difficulty breathing and make lung and heart problems worse. We are not asking anyone to go without heat, but to use an alternative source of heat if possible until our air quality returns to healthy levels.”

To sign up to receive e-mail notifications of these wood stove curtailment burn bans, visit www.swcleanair.org.

The following graphic is from an air monitoring station on Fourth Plain Rd. in Vancouver, and shows the air quality index based on levels of fine particulate.



Founded in 1968, the mission of the Southwest Clean Air Agency 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.

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