

## **Calm winds and Cold Nights Lead to a Stage 2 Burn Ban for Clark County**

*The use of all fireplaces, inserts, wood stoves and pellet stoves is prohibited until air quality improves. Households without an alternative source of heat are exempt.*

**VANCOUVER, Wash.** –Due to cold nights, poor ventilation and increasing levels of fine particle air pollution in Clark County, the Southwest Clean Air Agency (SWCAA) is issuing a Stage 2 Burn Ban effective immediately throughout Clark County. Cold nights followed by limited daytime ventilation and dispersion have caused fine particle air pollution levels to persistently rise toward the federal health-based standard. These conditions are forecast to continue through Saturday and possibly beyond. The use of all fireplaces, wood stoves and inserts, and pellet stoves is prohibited until further notice. If wood burning is your only source of heat, you are exempt from this curtailment and we ask that you burn as clean as possible. All outdoor burning is also prohibited during this Stage 2 Burn Ban.

Air quality driven burn ban curtailments may occur in two 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 a rapidly increased pollution trend and weather conditions indicate a high risk for exceeding air quality health standards.

Overnight on Tuesday January 24th the fine particulate matter levels exceeded the federal health-based ambient air quality standard because of woodstove use, stagnant air conditions, clear skies and cold evenings. The National Weather Service has forecast similar conditions for the next few days. While there has been some clearing during the day, the cold stagnant conditions in the evenings and woodstove use at night have resulted in high particulate matter pollution levels. “We are hopeful that calling this Stage 2 curtailment will moderate ambient levels of fine particulate matter until a more active weather system moves in,” said Uri Papish, executive director for the agency. “We are not asking anyone to go without heat, but to use an alternative source of heat if possible until weather patterns change and our air quality returns to healthy levels.”

Air pollution at levels approaching the federal health based standard is of particular concern for people with heart and lung problems, children, and adults over 65. The [Washington State Department of Health](#) recommends that people who are sensitive to air pollution limit time spent outdoors. Fine particulate matter pollution in smoke released from wood stoves, fireplaces and other wood burning activities 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.

The purpose of a burn ban is to reduce the amount of pollution that is creating unhealthy air. The cumulative effect of each individual’s wood stove use during these cold stagnant periods can cause pollution levels to rise to unhealthy levels, even impacting those who do not already have respiratory problems. The Southwest Clean Air Agency wants to remind people who burn wood,

whether occasionally or often, that it is important to always check burn ban status before lighting a fire and to obey burn bans. Again, please rely on your home's cleaner source of heat until air quality returns to healthy levels.

This county wide Stage 2 Burn Ban will remain in effect until monitors and weather forecasts indicate improved ventilation and clearing. To sign up to receive e-mail notifications of these burn bans or for clean burning techniques, visit [www.swcleanair.org](http://www.swcleanair.org).

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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