



# News Release

**Headline: The Southwest Clean Air Agency is issuing a Stage II Burn Ban for Clark, Cowlitz, and Lewis Counties**

**Release Date:** Tuesday, October 18, 2022

Effective immediately, the Southwest Clean Air Agency (SWCAA) is issuing a Stage 2 burn ban for Clark, Cowlitz, and Lewis Counties. This ban is in effect until noon Thursday.

Increasing levels of fine particle pollution have reached UNHEALTHY for SENSITIVE GROUPS to UNHEALTHY. Forecasters expect conditions to remain the same through Thursday with continued influx of wildfire smoke and cool mornings with poor mixing conditions. Pollution levels are expected to be elevated with spikes in the evening and early morning with contributions from wood burning. Conditions are expected to improve on Thursday.

All outdoor burning and the use of all fireplaces, wood stoves, and inserts is prohibited until further notice. If wood burning is your only source of heat, you are exempt from this curtailment and SWCAA asks that you burn as clean as possible.

“We are hopeful that calling this Stage 2 burn ban 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 wildfire smoke and weather patterns change to return our air quality to healthy levels.”

Current air quality information is available on the web:

<https://www.swcleanair.gov/burning/airquality.asp>

The Air Quality Index rates air quality based on labels of “good” (0 to 50, green), “moderate” (51 to 100, yellow), “unhealthy for sensitive groups” (101-150, orange), and “unhealthy” (151-200, red), and “very unhealthy” (201 to 300, deep red). Any reading above 300 is “hazardous.” Smoke levels (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) levels are expected to reach into the “unhealthy” range throughout Southwest Washington.

While residents can view current air quality conditions at <http://www.swcleanair.org>, SWCAA’s monitoring network does not capture air quality conditions in all communities. For this reason, it’s important for residents to gauge air quality conditions where they live and take appropriate actions to protect themselves. Remember, local smoke levels can rise and fall rapidly, depending on weather factors including wind direction.

As always, consult with your health care provider for more specific questions and concerns.

For weather information visit the National Weather Service website at: [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov)

**Contacts:**

Uri Papish, SW Clean Air Agency, Vancouver, WA, 360-574-3058, [uri@swcleanair.org](mailto:uri@swcleanair.org)