



News Release

Headline: The Southwest Clean Air Agency Extends the Stage II Burn Ban for Clark, Cowlitz, and Lewis Counties

Release Date: Thursday October 20, 2022

Effective immediately, the Southwest Clean Air Agency (SWCAA) is extending the Stage 2 air quality burn ban for Clark, Cowlitz, and Lewis Counties. This air quality burn ban will remain in effect until 10 am Friday.

Due to a continued influx of wildfire smoke and the cool mornings with poor mixing conditions, the levels of fine particle pollution are expected to remain in the UNHEALTHY for SENSITIVE GROUPS to UNHEALTHY range through at least Friday morning. Pollution levels are expected to be elevated with spikes in the evening and early morning with contributions from both wood stoves and wildfire smoke. Conditions are expected to improve on Friday.

This air quality burn ban is separate from, and in addition to, fire safety burn bans already in effect because of increased fire danger in the three counties.

All outdoor burning and the use of all fireplaces, wood stoves, and inserts is prohibited. 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 help 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_{2.5}) 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

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