

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q: What is the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District?

A: The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District is the local government agency responsible for regulating stationary, non-vehicular sources of air pollution in Sacramento County. Its jurisdiction includes all unincorporated areas of Sacramento County, as well as the cities of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Rancho Cordova and Sacramento.

Q: What does the AQMD do?

A: The AQMD works to ensure that Sacramento County's air quality meets state and federal health standards. Its overall mission is to achieve clean air goals by leading the region in protecting public health and the environment through innovative and effective programs, dedicated staff, community involvement, and public education. The AQMD works with local, state and federal government agencies, the business community, environmental groups, and private citizens.

Q: How is the AQMD governed?

A: The AQMD is governed by a fourteen-member Board of Directors composed of: all five Sacramento County Supervisors, four members of the Sacramento City Council, one member representing each of the cities of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom and Rancho Cordova, and one member representing the cities of Galt and Isleton.

Q: What is Rule 421: Mandatory No-Burn Restrictions?

A: Residential wood burning is the largest single source (45%) of Sacramento's fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) wintertime air quality problems. This type of air pollution can cause serious health problems, including death. The AQMD is required to establish measures to reduce particulate matter. Rule 421 would restrict burning in fireplaces, wood stoves, pellet stoves and other wood burning devices when the PM 2.5 levels are predicted to exceed the federal health standard during November, December, January and February.

Similar rules have been successfully implemented in other areas throughout California, and have successfully helped provide improvements to air quality.

Q: Why is this restriction necessary?

A: Residential wood burning is a primary source for particulate matter, which is a complex mixture that may contain soot, smoke, metals, nitrates, sulfates and dust. Scientific studies have linked long-term particle pollution, especially fine particles, with significant health problems including decreased lung function, aggravated asthma, development of chronic respiratory disease in children (asthma), irregular heartbeat, nonfatal heart attacks and even premature death in people with heart or lung disease. Reducing the amount of particulate matter in the air by limiting wood burning in the winter months will positively impact your health.



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SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN



continued

This restriction is necessary for Sacramento County to meet the federal government's health standard for PM 2.5. If it does not, other restrictions on business and industry will have to be implemented.

Q: How will these new restrictions affect me?

A: This new restriction would limit when homeowners or businesses with a fireplace, wood stove or pellet stove would be permitted to burn wood. This restriction would not apply to gas logs or gas fireplaces. This limitation would be conditional on the air quality in Sacramento County, and would be imposed when air quality standards are at their worst during the winter (November through February). Historic data indicates that these restrictions may apply to around 30 days per winter season.

Compliance will be enforced with visual inspections of chimneys to determine if a wood burning device is in use. Fines of \$50 would be issued for first time violators, increasing for further violations. First time offenders would be allowed to attend an instructional class in lieu of the fine.

Q: How will I know if I can't burn?

A: The AQMD will inform residents and businesses when it is a "Check Before You Burn" day by using a recorded telephone message for residents to call, messages posted on www.AirQuality.org, and www.SpareTheAir.com, e-mail, and notifications to radio and TV stations and newspapers in Sacramento County.

Q: Who will have to comply with this new rule?

A: Both residents and businesses in Sacramento County will have to comply. The only exceptions will be homes that use wood burning as their only source of heat or cooking.

Q: Who will decide if this restriction is put in place?

A: The AQMD Board of Directors will vote on this proposed rule at its September 27, 2007 meeting, which begins at 9:30 a.m. in Sacramento County's Board of Supervisors' Chambers – 700 H Street.

Q: If this new rule passes, when will it take effect?

A: November 1, 2007

Q: Why is the AQMD having these meetings if it's already planning to enforce these restrictions on me?

A: The AQMD is proposing Rule 421 as a way to help improve public health and air quality in the region. It is hosting public meetings throughout Sacramento County to inform residents of the proposed restrictions, offer them an opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns, and collect public comments to help refine the restrictions, if necessary. You are encouraged to submit your comments or concerns to the AQMD for consideration.

Q: Where can I get more information about Rule 421 or other AQMD related information?

A: You can contact the AQMD at 916-874-4800 or toll-free at 800-880-9025, or visit the Web site www.AirQuality.org.