

Newsletter Articles

Article 1 – Check Before You Burn Season is Here!



It's the season to Check Before You Burn! From November 1 through the end of February, residents and businesses in Sacramento County – including the cities of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Rancho Cordova, and Sacramento – must follow local burning regulations.

To protect public health, the Sac Metro Air District restricts the use of fireplaces, wood stoves, inserts, fire pits, and chimineas when fine particle pollution (PM2.5) is forecast to be high. Wood smoke is a major source of PM2.5 air pollution and poses health risks similar to those associated with wildfire smoke. These tiny particles – comprised of soot, metals, nitrates, sulfates, and dust – can enter the bloodstream, increasing the risks of asthma, heart attack, and stroke, particularly for those with pre-existing heart or lung conditions.

Did you know wood smoke contributes to over 50% of our county's air pollution during the winter months? To help protect public health and the environment, it's important to check the daily burn status before lighting a wood-burning fire. For more information on the Check Before You Burn program, you can:

- 1) Follow the Sac Metro Air District social
X: @AQMD
Facebook: SacMetroAirDistrict
- 2) Visit www.AirQuality.org/CBYB
- 3) Call 1-877-NO-BURN-5 (1-877-662-8765)

Check Before You Burn is implemented by the Sac Metro Air District in Sacramento County. The program provides the public with the same-day and next-day burn status.

Article 2 – Air Pollution Doesn’t Take a Holiday



As it gets colder throughout the region, it’s a perfect time to cozy up with your fuzzy socks, a soft sweater, your favorite blanket, and a hot drink! Just remember, if you’re thinking about lighting a fire between November and February, be sure to Check Before You Burn first – it’s the law in Sacramento County.

Burning wood releases unhealthy fine particle pollution (PM2.5) that harms our lungs and negatively impacts local air quality. During winter, calm, cold weather acts like a lid, trapping wood smoke closer to the ground where we breathe, which can lead to serious health problems, including:

- Decreased lung function
- Aggravated asthma
- Chronic respiratory diseases in children
- Irregular heartbeat
- Heart attacks
- Increased heart risks for post-menopausal women

The Sac Metro Air District investigates air quality complaints and issues wood-burning violations on “No Burn” days. If you see or smell smoke when wood burning is prohibited, you should [file a complaint](#).

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Article 3 – Five Reasons Not To Burn Wood



From November through February, the Sac Metro Air District enforces the Check Before You Burn law, which restricts wood burning during periods of high fine particle pollution (PM2.5). This regulation applies to residents and businesses in Sacramento County, including the cities of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Rancho Cordova, and Sacramento. This program helps reduce toxic emissions that emit from wood-burning devices.

Here are five reasons not to burn wood:

- 1) Wood smoke contains toxins that can linger in your lungs for months, increasing the risk of respiratory diseases and permanent damage to your health.
- 2) Small particles from wood smoke can enter your bloodstream and trigger an asthma attack, with long-term impacts on your heart and lung health.
- 3) Wood smoke poses a significant health risk, especially for older adults and the elderly.
- 4) Children are also particularly vulnerable, as their lungs are still developing.
- 5) Smoke from chimneys can infiltrate your home or your neighbor's home, even when doors and windows are closed.

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Article 4 – Tips for a Warmer Winter



Winter is officially here, and it's chilly outside! While we all want our homes to feel cozy, before you decide to light a wood-burning fireplace, consider its negative health impacts. Did you know that wood smoke contains tiny harmful particles known as fine particle pollution (PM2.5)? These tiny particles are up to 30 times smaller than a grain of sand! This smoke can trigger asthma attacks and lead to other heart and lung issues. Here are some tips for staying warm without compromising air quality or your health.

- 1) Bundle Up: Your body temperature can drop much more quickly than a room's. Instead of starting a fire, add an extra layer of clothing – like a sweatshirt, scarf, or hat – to stay warm.
- 2) Use Pool Noodles: Yes, really! Wind drafts can account for 5% to 30% of your energy use, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Cut a pool noodle in half lengthwise, wrap it in fabric, and place it under your door to effectively block drafts.
- 3) Be a Fan of Your Ceiling Fan: Warm air rises, so set your ceiling fan to the lowest speed in a clockwise direction. This helps push warm air back down into the room, potentially reducing heating costs by 10%!

Remember to Check Before You Burn before lighting a fire. If you burn wood on a “No Burn” day, first-time violations can result in a \$50 fine, with increased fines for any subsequent violations.

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