



# SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PRESS RELEASE

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## Check Before You Burn to Improve Air Quality in the Cooler Months Ahead

Seasonal air pollution prevention program runs from Nov. 1, 2021 through Feb. 28, 2022

**DIAMOND BAR, CA** – Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup> marks the start of the South Coast Air Quality Management District’s (South Coast AQMD) 10<sup>th</sup> annual Check Before You Burn season. From November through the end of February, residents are asked to check before burning wood in their fireplaces to limit emissions of fine particulate matter (PM2.5).

“Smoke from residential fireplaces is a significant source of PM2.5 during the winter months in the South Coast Air Basin,” said Wayne Nastri, South Coast AQMD’s Executive Officer, “Residents can do their part to improve air quality by spreading awareness and choosing not to burn wood when No-Burn Days are announced.”



A No-Burn day is a 24-hour ban on wood-burning in residential fireplaces, stoves, or outdoor fire pits in the South Coast Air Basin. South Coast AQMD forecasters call for residential No-Burn Days when PM2.5 is expected to reach elevated levels due to air emissions and stagnant weather conditions. High PM2.5 episodes are most common on calm and cool winter days, especially during holiday periods. Additional pollution from wood burning can turn air quality conditions on No-Burn days to “unhealthy”. Twenty-five No-Burn Days were called last winter.

Wood-burning can emit more than five tons of harmful PM2.5 per day in the South Coast Air Basin, more than three times the amount of PM2.5 emitted from all power plants in the Southland. Short-term exposure to PM2.5 can cause throat and eye irritation, aggravate asthma, and trigger other respiratory or cardiovascular health problems. Prolonged exposure to high levels of PM2.5 may increase the risk of strokes, heart attacks and cancers. Young children, older adults and people with lung or heart diseases are especially vulnerable to the health effects of PM2.5.

South Coast AQMD is providing several resources to the public to make following No-Burn Days as convenient as possible:

- **E-Mail Notifications:** Sign up to receive [Air Alerts](#) on air quality and be notified when a mandatory No-Burn Day has been issued for your neighborhood.
- **Check Before You Burn Map:** Visit the [Check Before You Burn map](#) on our website for daily forecast information.
- **Toll-Free Phone Number:** Call 866-966-3293 for daily Check Before You Burn information.
- **Web Resources:** Visit South Coast AQMD's Check Before You Burn webpages at [www.aqmd.gov/cbyb](http://www.aqmd.gov/cbyb) for more information.
- **Mobile App:** Download the South Coast AQMD app to check local air quality
- **Social Media:** Follow South Coast AQMD's social media accounts on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

South Coast AQMD's No-Burn Day alerts do not apply to mountain communities above 3,000 feet in elevation, the Coachella Valley or High Desert, homes that rely on wood as a sole source of heat, low-income households, and those without natural gas service. Gas and other non-wood burning fireplaces are also exempt.

### **About Check Before You Burn**

Check Before You Burn is South Coast AQMD's late fall and early winter program that became mandatory on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, under the provisions of South Coast AQMD's Rule 445 – Wood-Burning Devices. The campaign seeks to educate residents of the South Coast Air Basin about the hazards of wood smoke and prohibits burning of firewood in a fireplace, stove, or outdoor fire pit on No-Burn Days, when Unhealthy air quality is forecast. While air quality has improved dramatically in recent decades, Southern California still has some of the worst air pollution in the nation.

After decades of progress in reducing PM2.5 emissions, thanks partially to the last decade of the Check Before You Burn program, the South Coast Air Basin's PM2.5 levels now meet the U.S. EPA's 24-hour standard. Public participation during No-Burn Days will help the South Coast Air Basin continue to meet this air quality standard.

South Coast AQMD is the air pollution control agency for major portions of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties, including the Coachella Valley. For news, air quality alerts, event updates and more, please visit us at [www.aqmd.gov](http://www.aqmd.gov), download our award-winning app, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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