



**South Coast  
Air Quality Management District**  
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<http://www.aqmd.gov>



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## **Protect Public Health -- Check Before You Burn this Fall and Winter**

***SCAQMD requires residents to not burn wood in their fireplaces  
on days when air pollution levels are high***

DIAMOND BAR, Calif. -- The [South Coast Air Quality Management District](http://www.aqmd.gov) (SCAQMD) today launched its annual fall and winter air pollution prevention program, Check Before You Burn. Aimed at improving Southern California's air quality by restricting wood burning in residential fireplaces on days when air pollution levels are high, Check Before You Burn runs from November through the end of February.

A recent SCAQMD survey<sup>[1]</sup> of residents found that 72 percent of respondents are concerned with the air quality where they live but most of these same residents – 67 percent – did not recognize that wood smoke is a significant contributor to air pollution.

“Southern Californians want to understand impacts to air quality and are demonstrating their willingness to make changes for the good of public health,” said SCAQMD’s Executive Officer Wayne Nastri. “The Check Before You Burn program is part of this effort and when residents are aware of and comply with no-burn days, then together we improve the air quality in the region.”

Although some might consider wood smoke “natural,” smoke caused by burning wood in fireplaces can emit more than five tons of harmful PM2.5 (fine particulate matter) emissions per day in the South Coast Air Basin – more than three times the amount of PM2.5 emitted from all of the power plants in the Southland. Particulate matter in the air can cause throat and eye irritation, aggravate asthma and trigger other respiratory conditions. Breathing high levels of particulate matter over long periods of time can also cause more serious health problems.

No-burn alerts are issued by SCAQMD when stagnant weather conditions elevate fine particulate pollution to unhealthy levels. These No-burn days are 24-hour periods when

burning wood in fireplaces, backyard fire pits and wood stoves across the entire South Coast Air Basin are prohibited.

The Check Before You Burn program encourages residents to take the pledge to Check Before You Burn and sign up for no-burn alerts at [www.AirAlerts.org](http://www.AirAlerts.org).

The fall and wintertime program became mandatory on Nov. 1, 2011, under the provisions of SCAQMD's Rule 445 – Wood-Burning Devices. For more information about SCAQMD and the Check Before You Burn program, please visit its web page, <http://www.aqmd.gov/cbyb> or call the toll-free hotline at 866-966-3293 to learn if an alert is in effect.

While air quality has improved dramatically in recent decades -- PM2.5 levels have dropped by 51 percent since 2000 -- Southern California still has some of the worst air quality in the nation.

SCAQMD is the air pollution control agency for Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

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[1] *Gomez Research, SCAQMD Check Before You Burn Public Opinion Survey 2017, October 2017, Pasadena, Calif.*