



South Coast Air Quality Management District

South Coast
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NEWS

For Immediate Release

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Heavy Rains Brought Cleaner Air and a Reduced Number of No-Burn Days to Southern California This Winter

Due to heavy rains this winter, the [South Coast Air Quality Management District](http://www.aqmd.gov) issued only 13 no-burn notices across the South Coast basin during the annual Check Before You Burn program. This is a significant decrease of wood-burning bans compared to the 33 no-burn days the previous year. Every year, from Nov. 1 to the last day in February when levels of PM_{2.5} are forecast to be high, SCAQMD meteorologists issue a 24-hour no-burn ban for residential fireplaces and outdoor fire pits.

“Rain helps to clean the air by removing small particles from the air, including those from wood smoke,” said Wayne Nastri, SCAQMD’s executive officer. “Fine particulate matter found in wood-smoke, also known as PM_{2.5}, can build up which causes unhealthy air quality.”

When a no-burn alert is issued, residents living in Orange County and non-desert areas of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino counties are prohibited from burning wood or manufactured fire logs in their fireplaces or any indoor or outdoor wood-burning device.

“The best way to avoid being exposed to wood-smoke pollution is to not have any fires,” said Dr. Afif El-Hasan, pediatrician at Kaiser Permanente. “We can make a big difference as a community in taking care of our air by not burning wood, which includes a fireplace, firepit or wood-burning stove on a no-burn day.”

This season, SCAQMD inspectors issued nine no-burn citations and 3,574 people signed up and promised to “Check Before You Burn” to help prevent wood-smoke pollution from harming their neighborhoods. To raise public awareness about no-burn days, SCAQMD engaged with residents one-on-one at ten community events in each county, such as the:

- Lung Force Walk at CBS Studios in Los Angeles County
- Irvine Global Village Festival in Orange County
- Winter Wonderland in San Bernardino County
- Riverside Market Night in Riverside County

SCAQMD reached community members through social media and a [series of educational videos](#) to educate residents about the health hazards of wood-smoke. Residents in the region are encouraged to sign-up to receive no-burn notifications via email by signing up at www.AirAlerts.org.

“SCAQMD understands how nostalgic it is to sit by a warm fireplace during cold winter days, but we also know how unhealthy wood smoke can be for people in our region, especially children and people who suffer from respiratory disease,” Nastri said. “Everyone in the region must do their part to clean the air and protect public health.”

Community partners like Dr. El-Hasan with Kaiser Permanente, radio host Cece Valencia with Power 106, AMC Theatres, Riverside Fire Department, City of Corona, City of Rancho Palos Verdes and a number of other local public agencies used their platforms to notify their constituents when a no-burn notice was in effect.

About Check Before You Burn

[Check Before You Burn](#) is South Coast Air Quality Management District’s late fall and early winter program that became mandatory on Nov. 1, 2011, under the provisions of SCAQMD’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.

The 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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