



# SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PRESS RELEASE

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## Check Before You Burn Season Closes with 25 No-Burn Days this Winter

**DIAMOND BAR**— The South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) issued 25 No-Burn days across the South Coast Air Basin during the ninth annual Check Before You Burn program. This is a slight increase from last year's 23 No-Burn days, when similar drier conditions prevailed. Every winter from November 1 to the last day in February, when levels of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) are forecast to be high, South Coast AQMD meteorologists issue a 24-hour ban on burning wood or manufactured fire logs for residential fireplaces and outdoor fire pits.

“Fine particulate matter is the main pollutant formed when burning wood and can lead to unhealthy air quality and adverse health effects,” said Wayne Nastri, South Coast AQMD’s Executive Officer. “Avoiding wood burning on No-Burn days can minimize exposure to poor air quality and help the region meet our clean air goals.”

This year, the threshold for declaring a No-Burn day was lower based on recent updates to [South Coast AQMD Rule 445](#). Dry weather conditions and improvements in forecasting PM2.5 levels also contributed.



Preliminary analysis based on data collected from 2018 to 2020, shows South Coast AQMD has met the federal 24-hour PM2.5 standard of 35 µg/m3 in the South Coast Air Basin for the first time.

Enforcement activity continued to further enhance awareness and compliance with the program. On No-Burn days, South Coast AQMD air quality inspectors were dispatched to each of the four counties of the agency’s jurisdiction. On those days, 172 complaints were received and investigated related to unauthorized burning. 62 informational letters explaining the program were distributed and 36 violation notices were issued to those suspected of, or found burning, respectively, on No-Burn days.

To notify the public when a No-Burn day was called, advisories were posted through South Coast AQMD's social media channels, distributed to local media outlets, published to the agency's website and emailed to subscribers who signed up for No-Burn day notifications. Residents can sign up for email or text notifications of No-Burn days at [www.AirAlerts.org](http://www.AirAlerts.org).

Although some might consider wood smoke "natural," smoke caused by burning wood in fireplaces can emit approximately five tons of harmful PM2.5 emissions per day in the South Coast Air Basin. That is equal to PM2.5 emissions from all passenger vehicles in the Basin. However, during the CBYB season when wood burning activities are more common, the PM2.5 emissions from this source can be twice as high compared to an average day in the year. Reducing wood burning on No-Burn days is critical as we work toward meeting federal PM2.5 clean air standards.

Residents can help reduce air pollution by taking advantage of free and deep discounts through South Coast AQMD's [Wood Stove & Fireplace Change-Out Incentive Program](#). Restrictions may apply. Residents can also upgrade to a clean furnace through South Coast [AQMD's CLEANair Furnace Rebate Program](#). The program is currently accepting applications for consumer rebates on Ultra-Low NOx High Altitude Furnaces, Ultra-Low NOx Weatherized Furnaces and replacement of a gas-fired furnace with a traditional all-electric heat pump system.

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

Check Before You Burn is South Coast AQMD's late fall and early winter program that became mandatory on Nov. 1, 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. Breathing high levels of PM2.5 can cause throat and eye irritation, aggravate asthma and trigger other respiratory or cardiovascular conditions. Breathing this pollution over longer periods of time can increase the risk of heart attack and stroke and can lead to low birth weights in newborns. While air quality has improved dramatically in recent decades, Southern California still has some of the worst air pollution in the nation.

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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