

FAQs about Residential Wood Burning, Rule 4901 and Check Before You Burn

WHAT IS CHECK BEFORE YOU BURN?

Check Before You Burn is an educational program that notifies you when you can use your residential wood burning device. From Nov. 1 through February, we issue a daily wood-burning status for each county to let you know if you can burn.

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

The Valley's challenges in meeting the ever-toughening federal air quality standards are unmatched by any other region in the nation due to the Valley's unique topography, geography and meteorology. New federal air quality standards are encroaching upon background pollution levels in the San Joaquin Valley and the Valley cannot meet the federal air quality goals without addressing pollution from residential wood burning.

During winter, fine particulate pollution (PM2.5 for short) is a health problem in the Valley. It's so small it can invade your bloodstream and travel to your lungs and throughout your body. It can cause lung disease, respiratory illness, heart attacks and even stroke.

WHY GO AFTER THE PUBLIC, WHY NOT GO AFTER BUSINESSES?

Valley businesses are already subject to the toughest air regulations in the nation and have spent over \$40 billion to reduce air pollution in the Valley. Pollution in the Valley from businesses has been reduced by more than 80% over the past 25 years. Mobile sources are the biggest source of pollution in the Valley.

IS RESIDENTIAL WOOD BURNING REALLY THAT BIG OF A POLLUTION SOURCE?

The District estimates that there are over 240,000 residences in the Valley contributing 13% of the total winter-time directly emitted PM2.5 emissions. During the worst winter days, up to a third of all particulate pollution comes from people burning wood in their fireplaces or wood-burning devices.

HOW DO I REGISTER MY WOOD BURNING DEVICE?

Go to www.valleyair.org/CBYBRegistration and you will be walked through a process that will instruct you how to register your device. If you do not have computer access, you can call your local District office and we will assist you with your registration.

Fresno – 559-230-6000, Bakersfield – 661-392-5500,
Modesto – 209-557-6400

I HAVE A NEWER CERTIFIED DEVICE. DOES THAT MEAN I CAN BURN MORE THAN I DID LAST WINTER?

Yes! Valley residents will be able to use their certified devices unless air pollution climbs to a critical point where no one will be allowed to burn.

If you purchase or own a newer device, you will be able to use it more than you have in the past, as long as you register and operate it in compliance with Rule 4901.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY WOOD BURNING DEVICE IS EPA PHASE II CERTIFIED?

There are three different ways to tell if your wood burning stove/insert/heater is EPA Phase II certified.

- If your device was manufactured after 1990, it should be certified.
- If your device is on a list of EPA certified devices which you can find here: <http://www.epa.gov/Compliance/resources/publications/monitoring/caa/woodstoves/certifiedwood.pdf>
- You can contact your local fireplace retailer to assess the certification of your device. A list of Valley fireplace retailers is available here: <http://valleyair.org/grants/documents/burncleaner/2014-BC-Retailer-List.pdf>

ARE THERE CHANGES TO CHECK BEFORE YOU BURN?

Yes. The primary change is that instead of two declaration levels (Please Burn Cleanly or Wood Burning Prohibited), we will now have three levels: *No Restrictions, Burning Discouraged; No Burning Unless Registered and No Burning For All.*

Valley residents will be able to register their device if it is a pellet stove or if it is EPA Phase II certified. When the District declares "No Burning Unless Registered," only registered devices can be used. Registering is easy and available at www.valleyair.org/CBYBRegistration.

I'D LIKE TO BUY A NEW WOOD STOVE BUT I CAN'T AFFORD ONE. CAN THE AIR DISTRICT HELP ME?

We have an incentive program called Burn Cleaner that will give you money toward the purchase of any one of many stoves and inserts that are clean burning. You can get \$1,000 back from your purchase! And if you qualify for our low-income program, you can get \$2,500 for the purchase of a new device. Plus, receive an additional \$500 toward installation costs for a gas device. Visit our website at www.valleyair.org/Burncleaner.

I HEARD LANDLORDS COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE LOW-INCOME BURN CLEANER INCENTIVE AMOUNT.

Either the landlord or tenant can receive incentive funding through the District’s Burn Cleaner program. During the application process, landlords will have to provide documentation verifying that their tenant is low income. Similarly, tenants applying must get permission from their landlord. Go to www.valleyair.org/burncleaner to review low-income eligibility guidelines.

WHEN CAN I USE MY OUTDOOR FIREPLACE, CHIMINEA, OR FIRE PIT?

These devices are not eligible to be registered, therefore they can only be used on days when the burn status is “No Restrictions, Burning Discouraged”. Any outdoor device that uses only gas or propane can be used anytime.

LAST YEAR THERE WERE EXEMPTIONS TO THE RULE (GAS DEVICES, HOMES WITHOUT NATURAL GAS SERVICE, HOMES WHERE WOOD BURNING WAS THE SOLE SOURCE OF HEAT) HAVE THOSE EXEMPTIONS CHANGED?

Those exemptions have not changed.

