



South Coast
AQMD

SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PRESS RELEASE

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Check Before You Burn Season Closes with 35 No-Burn Days this Winter

Weather and pollution from increased port activity likely due to more No-Burn days in 2021

DIAMOND BAR – The South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) issued 35 No-Burn days across the South Coast Air Basin during the tenth annual Check Before You Burn program. This is an increase from last year's 23 No-Burn days. Every winter from November 1 to the last day in February, when levels of 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. Pollution from wood smoke contains PM2.5 which can lodge deep in the lungs and cause a variety of respiratory health problems.

"This year, we saw little wind, and overcast days, trapping air pollution below the clouds," said Wayne Nastri, South Coast AQMD's Executive Officer. "That along with record-breaking activity at the Ports caused a perfect-storm of events resulting in an increased number of No-Burn days."

South Coast region saw particularly high levels of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) that were caused by a variety of factors in November and December 2021 including weather conditions that caused increased levels of PM2.5. Another major contributing factor was the substantial increase of emissions from the Ports. South Coast AQMD is continuing to evaluate the full impact of port emissions, but preliminary analysis shows an increase in PM2.5 and nitrogen oxide (NOx—a precursor to smog) emissions coming from activities associated with the Ports.

Enforcement activities continued to further enhance awareness of, 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, almost 197 complaints were received and investigated related to unauthorized burning. Approximately 70 informational letters explaining the program were distributed and 42 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.

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 [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 regulatory agency responsible for improving air quality for large areas of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, including the Coachella Valley. For news, air quality alerts, event updates and more, please visit us at www.aqmd.gov, download our award-winning app, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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