

Summary of  
Proposed Regulation 6, Rule 3:  
Wood-Burning Devices

The Air District is proposing the new Regulation 6, Rule 3: Wood-Burning Devices to reduce emissions of harmful Particulate Matter (PM) from wood-burning devices, including indoor and outdoor fireplaces and wood-burning stoves. Below is a summary of how the proposed rule might affect residents and businesses:

- ▶ **Residents and Business Owners** who own or use any indoor or outdoor fireplace, fire pit, wood or pellet stove or fireplace would need to:
  - Check before burning between November 1 and February 28 because if air pollution levels are forecast to be unhealthy the District will declare a mandatory curtailment (or no burn day).
  - Refrain from any burning if a mandatory curtailment is called. Gas-fueled fireplaces and logs, gas inserts and electrical fireplaces are okay.
  - Burn clean, hotter fires with plenty of air, when burning is allowed, in order to prevent visible smoke from a chimney or flue.
  - Not burn any garbage, plastics or other inappropriate materials, when burning is allowed.
- ▶ **Manufacturers, Sellers, Re-sellers and Installers** of wood-burning devices would need to:
  - Sell or install only EPA-certified wood-burning and pellet-fueled devices intended for use within the Air District. Gas-fueled fireplaces and logs, gas inserts and electrical fireplaces are okay. This **does not** mean owners would have to replace existing fireplaces or woodstoves or do so when a house or property is sold or transferred.
  - Provide information to purchasers on proper installation, operation, and maintenance of the wood-burning device and on the health effects of wood smoke.
  - Provide documentation to purchasers that any wood-burning device sold is EPA certified.
- ▶ **Builders of Homes or Commercial Buildings** would have to:
  - Install only EPA-certified wood-burning or pellet-fueled device in any new building construction. Gas-fueled fireplaces and logs, gas inserts and electrical fireplaces are okay.
  - Provide information on proper installation, operation, and maintenance of the wood-burning device and on the health effects of wood smoke.
- ▶ **Manufacturers of Solid Fuels** such as pressed or manufactured logs or pellet fuels must:
  - Label the product package with the following:
    - Warning statement of the health risks associated with particulate matter from solid fuel smoke.
    - Information on burning curtailment, reminding the purchaser to check the Air Quality status before any burning.
- ▶ **Suppliers of Firewood** would have to label their package or provide upon delivery the following information:
  - Whether the wood is:
    - “Seasoned” (dry), if the moisture content is less than 20%, or
    - “Unseasoned” (green), if the moisture content is greater than 20%, and provide instructions on how to properly dry the wood before burning.
  - Warning statement of the health risks associated with particulate matter from wood smoke.
  - Information on burning curtailment, reminding the purchaser to check the Air Quality status before any burning.

**Q. Why is wood smoke considered air pollution?**

- A. When wood and other solid fuels are burned, fine particulate air pollution is released in the smoke. These tiny particles (about 1/70<sup>th</sup> the width of a human hair) can pass deep into the lungs and cause serious health effects to the public. High levels of fine particulate can cause difficulty breathing, aggravate asthma and even cause premature death for people with heart or lung disease. Winter weather conditions can trap wood smoke close to the ground concentrating the air pollution to unhealthy levels. Under these conditions, wood smoke is the largest portion (approximately 33%) of the fine particulate matter.

**Q. Is the Air District banning fires in my fireplace?**

- A. No. Through this regulation, the Air District is asking residents of the Bay Area to be responsible about their burning in their fireplaces, wood stoves, pellet stoves and outdoor firepits during the winter months of November through February. When air pollution reaches unhealthy levels that adversely affect public health, the public will not be allowed to burn. Other than these few days, approximately 20 days each winter, you can still have legal fires.

**Q. How do I find out whether I can have a fire in my fireplace or wood stove?**

- A. During the winter months of November through February, you can:
- Listen – to local radio and TV news media for notices,
  - Call – 1-800-HELP-AIR for information,
  - Check – [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org) or [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov) .

You can also sign up with the Air District for e-mail alerts, sign up for text messages or read the weather section of the local newspaper.

Whenever you light a fire you should **always** check before burning, burn clean dry wood, burn short, hotter fires that don't smoke and keep your hearth and chimney well maintained.

**Q. Why aren't EPA-certified wood stove or fireplace inserts and pellet stoves or inserts allowed to burn when air pollution levels are high?**

- A. These wood burning devices are cleaner but still emit fine particulate air pollution. When the air pollution increases to unhealthy levels, these devices collectively contribute a significant part of the excessive air pollution which is harmful to the public.

**Q. How is the Air District going to enforce this regulation?**

- A. First and foremost, the Air District is going to get the word out to the residents of the Bay Area, through outreach, to inform the public of the adverse health effects of wood smoke and about the requirements of this new regulation. The Air District has sole responsibility to enforce this regulation. The Air District will first provide a warning letter to someone found to be in violation of the regulation, explaining how to avoid any violations in the future and why it is important that they do their part to avoid the harmful public health effects of wood smoke. People who follow the advice in the warning letter and change their burning practices should be able to avoid additional violations and a citation. Repeat violators will receive a citation through the mail, followed by enforcement action by the Air District.