



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 7, 2017

Media contact

[Seth Preston](#)

Office: 360-428-1617 ext. 235

Mobile: 360-724-8766

Stage 1 air quality burn ban issued for Columbia Valley

Smoke from burning wood to heat homes impacts air quality

KENDALL – The [Northwest Clean Air Agency](#) is calling a Stage 1 air quality burn ban for the Columbia Valley urban growth area in Whatcom County because smoke particles are reducing air quality.

Fine particles in wood smoke are harmful because they can be inhaled deeply into lungs and damage delicate tissues.

During a Stage 1 air quality burn ban:

- All burning in fireplaces or uncertified woodstoves is prohibited unless you qualify for [an exemption from NWCAA](#). (See <http://nwcleanairwa.gov/wood-heating-exemption-forms/> for more information.) No outdoor burning is allowed, including residential, agricultural and forest burning.
- Use of certified woodstoves, pellet stoves, and other certified wood-burning devices is allowed. Residents are urged to make sure to limit wood smoke from those devices.

Burn ban violators could face fines and other enforcement actions. Remember that it is always illegal to emit excess chimney smoke and impact your neighbors. It is also illegal to burn trash.

The burn ban is based on weather forecasts and current air pollution from small particles. Right now, air quality is predicted to be worse than the national health-based standard for at least 24 hours.

The Stage 1 ban will remain in effect until further notice. If conditions get worse, Northwest Clean Air will move to a Stage 2 burn ban. Check NWCAA's website (www.nwcleanairwa.gov) for up-to-date burn ban information.

Air pollution can trigger asthma attacks, cause difficulty breathing, and make lung and heart problems worse. Air pollution is especially harmful to children, people with heart and lung problems, and adults age 65 and older.

More information

- Local air quality information: [Northwest Clean Air Agency](#).
- Statewide air quality monitoring: [Washington Department of Ecology](#).

The Northwest Clean Air Agency is responsible for enforcing federal, state and local air quality regulations in Island, Skagit, and Whatcom counties. In addition to permitting and regulating industrial sources of air pollution, the agency provides services and information related to asbestos, indoor air quality, outdoor burning, woodstoves and fireplaces. More information about the agency is available at www.nwcleanairwa.gov.