



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 27, 2017

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Columbia Valley residents advised to limit wood burning

Smoke pollution levels rise during cold weather, stagnant air

KENDALL – The [Northwest Clean Air Agency](#) urges Columbia Valley residents in Whatcom County to avoid or limit burning wood for heat through the weekend because elevated smoke levels are impacting local air quality.

Air monitors showed elevated levels of fine particles overnight into Friday morning in the Columbia Valley. Cold temperatures and stagnant air conditions are expected to last through Tuesday morning. NWCAA is not calling for a burn ban at this time.

Burning wood for home heating – especially when it's not done correctly – can produce smoke pollution that's harmful to you, your family and your neighbors.

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

Smoke pollution can trigger asthma attacks, cause difficulty breathing, and make lung and heart problems worse. Elevated levels of smoke can be especially harmful to children, people with heart and lung problems, and adults age 65 and older.

Air quality is expected to improve throughout the day. But smoke levels will build as temperatures drop and more people light fires to heat homes.

If you must burn for heat, burn small, hot fires. Check your chimney 20 minutes after lighting a fire to ensure that it is not smoking, and if it is, take action. Do not let fires smolder overnight.

More information

- Current local air quality: [Northwest Washington Clean Air Agency](#).
- Current statewide air quality: [Washington Department of Ecology](#).
- Videos on proper wood burning: [Northwest Clean Air's YouTube channel](#).

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.