



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media contact

[Seth Preston](#)

Office: 360-428-1617 ext. 235

Mobile: 360-724-8766

Columbia Valley residents urged to limit wood burning

Cold weather, stagnant air causing smoke levels to rise

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

Air monitors showed elevated levels of fine particles overnight into Wednesday morning in the Columbia Valley. Cold temperatures and stagnant air conditions are expected to last for several more days. NWCAA is not calling for a burn ban at this time, but may if current conditions continue.

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 to some extent. 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](#).

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.