



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Media contact**

[Seth Preston](#)

Office: 360-428-1617 ext. 235

Mobile: 360-724-8766

## **Columbia Valley air quality burn ban elevated to Stage 2**

**KENDALL** – The [Northwest Clean Air Agency](#) is calling a Stage 2 air quality burn ban in the Columbia Valley urban growth area in the Kendall area in Whatcom County because cold, stagnant air is preventing smoke from wood burning from clearing out.

NWCAA called a Stage 1 burn ban on Sunday, Jan. 13, but since then air quality has worsened in the area.

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

During a Stage 2 burn ban, all burning is prohibited unless you qualify for an exemption from NWCAA. (See <http://nwcleanairwa.gov/wood-heating-exemption-forms> for information.)

### **During a Stage 2 burn ban:**

- No burning is allowed in any wood-burning fireplaces, woodstoves, or fireplace inserts (certified or uncertified), and pellet stoves unless you have an exemption from NWCAA.
- No outdoor fires of any kind are allowed. This includes burning of yard waste, land clearing, agricultural burning, and forest burning, plus recreational fires in devices like backyard fire kettles, chimneys, and fire pits.

The Stage 2 burn ban will remain in effect until further notice. Check [www.waburnbans.net](http://www.waburnbans.net) or NWCAA's website ([www.nwcleanairwa.gov](http://www.nwcleanairwa.gov)) for up-to-date burn ban information.

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.

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](#).

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**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](http://www.nwcleanairwa.gov).