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Sept. 9, 2022

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Wildfire smoke prompts air quality burn ban in Whatcom, Skagit, Island counties

Outdoor burning prohibited until further notice

The [Northwest Clean Air Agency](#) is calling a Stage 1 air quality burn ban for Island, Skagit, and Whatcom counties because harmful wildfire smoke is impacting local air quality.

Outdoor burning is not allowed during a Stage 1 air quality burn ban. Home heating with fireplaces and uncertified wood stoves is also prohibited.

The ban is expected to be elevated to Stage 2 as conditions worsen over the weekend. A Stage 2 ban would apply to agricultural burning and to recreational burning, including campfires and fire pits.

This air quality burn ban is separate from, and in addition to, fire safety burn bans already in effect because of increased fire danger in the three counties.

"The Northwest Clean Air Agency is calling an air quality burn ban in addition to the existing fire safety burn bans to further reduce smoke in our area and protect public health," said NWCAA Executive Director Mark Buford. "Once the air has cleared, we will remove the air quality burn ban. But the fire safety burn bans will remain in place until fire officials determine that fire danger has passed."

Prohibiting certain types of burning limits extra smoke that impacts air quality and the health of people already affected by wildfire smoke.

People can inhale tiny smoke particles deeply into lungs and damage delicate tissues. That 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 ages 65 and older.

Burn ban violators could face fines and other enforcement actions.

The 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.

Find information on how to protect yourself and others during wildfire smoke events on NWCAA's website (<http://bit.ly/2XolMTN>).

Check NWCAA's website (<https://nwcleanairwa.gov/>) for up-to-date burn ban information or check Twitter (@NWCleanAir); NWCAA's Facebook page; or Instagram (nwcleanair).

More information

- Washington Smoke Information blog: wasmoke.blogspot.com
- Statewide air quality monitoring: Washington Department of Ecology.
- Health questions? Contact your local health department:
 - Skagit County Health: 360-416-1500
 - Island County Health: 360-679-7350
 - Whatcom County Health: 360-778-6000

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, wood stoves, and fireplaces. More information about the agency is available at <https://nwcleanairwa.gov/>.