



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Wildfire smoke prompts air quality burn ban in Columbia Valley urban growth area in Whatcom County**

Outdoor burning, some woodstove use prohibited until further notice

The [Northwest Clean Air Agency](#) is calling a Stage 1 air quality burn ban for the Columbia Valley area in Whatcom County 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 could be elevated to Stage 2 if conditions worsen. A Stage 2 ban would apply to agricultural burning; to recreational burning, including campfires and fire pits; and to both uncertified and certified woodstoves, as well as fireplaces.

**This air quality burn ban is separate from, and in addition to, a fire safety burn ban already in effect because of increased fire danger in Whatcom County.** Fire safety burn bans also are in effect in Skagit and Island counties.

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](http://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

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