



South Coast Air Quality Management District

21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765-4182
(909) 396-2000 • www.aqmd.gov



AQMD Fact Sheet (April 2008)

Background

AQMD has developed the Healthy Hearths initiative to reduce smoke from fireplaces and woodstoves, which is a significant source of air pollution. The smoke contains gases and tiny particles known as PM 2.5 which stands for “particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter.” These particles are so small that the body’s natural defense mechanisms can’t keep them from entering deep into the lungs where they can harm us by reducing lung function, making bronchitis and other lung conditions worse, and triggering asthma and heart attacks. Pollutants from fireplaces and stoves can also cause indoor air quality problems. Additionally, incomplete combustion of wood can produce toxic air pollutants, such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

Because this area does not meet State and federal health-based air quality standards, and other air districts in California have adopted programs similar to Healthy Hearths, AQMD was required to adopt a wood burning rule.

Rule Summary

AQMD’s Rule 445-Wood Burning Devices is applicable to the South Coast Air Basin portion of the South Coast Air Quality Management District and is not applicable to the Coachella Valley. AQMD Rule 445 was adopted on March 7, 2008 and includes the following key components:

- On or after March 9, 2009:
 - ✓ no permanently installed indoor or outdoor wood burning device can be installed in *new* developments (open hearth fireplaces with a gas log set or other design feature that precludes wood burning are acceptable).
- On or after September 8, 2008:
 - ✓ a permanently installed indoor or outdoor wood burning device can only be sold or installed in *existing* homes or businesses if it is one of these cleaner burning options:
 - ❖ U.S. EPA Phase II-certified fireplace insert or stove;
 - ❖ Pellet-fueled wood burning heater;
 - ❖ Masonry heater (not an open hearth wood burning fireplace); or
 - ❖ Dedicated gaseous-fueled fireplace.

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- Currently:
 - ✓ can not burn anything not intended as fuel (e.g., trash) in a wood burning device.
 - ✓ commercial firewood facilities may only sell seasoned (less than 20 percent moisture content) firewood from July 1 through the end of February each year.
- Beginning in November 1, 2011 (if necessary to meet air quality goals):
 - ✓ establishes a mandatory wood burning curtailment program on high pollution days during November through February. Would apply to specific areas where PM2.5 levels are forecast to exceed 35 micrograms per cubic meter (federal 24-hour standard). Based on current air quality conditions, there may be 10 to 25 mandatory curtailment days in specific areas, but as air quality improves there may be fewer or no curtailment days.

Exemptions

- Wood burning cookstoves are exempt from this regulation.
- New developments above 3,000 feet in elevation may install a wood burning device **if** it is a cleaner unit as listed in the rule for existing developments [refer to paragraph (d)(2) in Rule 445 – Wood Burning Devices].
- New developments, above or below 3,000 feet in elevation that do not have access to natural gas within 150 feet of the property line may install a wood burning device **if** it is a cleaner unit as listed in the rule [refer to paragraph (d)(2) in Rule 445 – Wood Burning Devices].
- If mandatory wood burning curtailments are issued on high pollution days in 2011, households where wood is the sole source of heat, or low income households, or households with no natural gas service will be exempt, as will the use of ceremonial fires.

Incentives

AQMD plans an incentive program in fall 2008 to encourage residents to permanently install clean-burning gas log sets in their open-hearth fireplaces. Check www.aqmd.gov in summer 2008 for more information.