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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 3, 2011

Unhealthy Air Quality Leads to a Stage 2 Burn Ban for Clark County *The use of all fireplaces, inserts, wood stoves and pellet stoves is prohibited until air quality improves. Households without an alternative source of heat are exempt.*

VANCOUVER, Wash. – Due to persistent unhealthy levels of air pollution in Clark County, the Southwest Clean Air Agency (SWCAA) is issuing a Stage 2 Burn Ban effective immediately throughout Clark County. The use of all fireplaces, pellet stoves, wood stoves and inserts is prohibited until air quality improves and the Stage 2 Burn Ban is lifted. If wood burning is your only source of heat, you are exempt from this curtailment and we ask that you burn as clean as possible. All outdoor burning is also prohibited during this Stage 2 Burn Ban.

Air pollution at the level Clark County is currently experiencing is especially harmful to people with heart and lung problems, children, and adults over 65. The [Washington State Department of Health](#) recommends that people who are sensitive to air pollution limit time spent outdoors. Fine particulate matter pollution in smoke released from wood stoves, fireplaces and other wood burning are of concern because they can reach deep into the lungs. Episodes of high fine particle pollution can trigger asthma attacks, cause difficulty breathing and make lung and heart problems worse.

“We are already exceeding the federal health-based standard for fine particulate matter pollution and are hoping this Stage 2 Burn Ban will keep our air quality from getting even worse,” said Bob Elliott, executive director for the agency. “We are not asking anyone to go without heat, but to use an alternative source of heat if possible until weather patterns change and our air quality returns to healthy levels.”

“The cumulative effect of each individual’s wood stove use during these cold stagnant periods causes pollution levels to rise to unhealthy levels, even impacting those who do not already have respiratory problems,” said Jackie Brown, air quality specialist.

The purpose of a burn ban is to reduce the amount of pollution that is creating unhealthy air. The Southwest Clean Air Agency wants to remind people who burn wood, whether occasionally or often, that it is important to always check burn ban status before lighting a fire and to obey burn bans. Again, please rely on your home’s cleaner source of heat until air quality returns to healthy levels.

This countywide Stage 2 Burn Ban will remain in effect until our monitors show demonstrated improvement in our air quality and weather forecasts indicate improved ventilation. To sign up to receive e-mail notifications of these burn bans or for clean burning techniques, visit www.swcleanair.org.

Founded in 1968, the mission of the Southwest Clean Air Agency is to preserve and enhance the air quality in southwest Washington. Serving the counties of Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum, SWCAA is responsible for protecting the public’s health through the enforcement of federal, state and local air quality standards and regulations.

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