



Maricopa County
Air Quality Department



HEALTH WATCH ADVISORY

EFFECTIVE: Tuesday, Dec. 24 and Wednesday, Dec. 25

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality has issued an air quality Health Watch for Tuesday, Dec. 24, and will likely escalate the watch to a High Pollution Advisory through Christmas day and evening, Dec. 25, for fine Particulate Matter-2.5 (soot).

The Maricopa County Air Quality Department has issued a No Burn day for Tuesday and will also issue a No Burn day on Christmas Day if a Health Watch or a High Pollution Advisory is called.

The Health Watch is being issued because significant levels of soot are expected from fireplace wood burning. ADEQ and MCAQD are currently conducting a “No Burn Day? Don’t Burn Wood!” campaign to make Maricopa County residents aware of the serious health threat that soot poses.

A Health Watch means that the concentration of PM_{2.5} may approach the federal health standard for this pollutant. ADEQ recommends that unusually sensitive people, such as people with heart or lung disease, older adults and children, should reduce prolonged activity or heavy exertion, especially when outdoors on Tuesday and Wednesday. A High Pollution Advisory would extend such precautions to the general population.

“We understand how this might affect some holiday celebrations. Unfortunately it is a severe health and economic issue,” Maricopa County Air Quality Department Director Bill Wiley said. “Woodburning restrictions are in place to protect our health. This is especially a concern on holiday nights when there are numerous parties and fires. Please think about your family and friends before you light that wood burning fire. Please do your part to avoid adding more pollution to our air and do not light a woodburning fire during this period.”

The Maricopa County Trip Reduction program and Valley Metro Business Services request employers activate their HPA Plan. Residents and employers are asked to use these tips to help make the air healthier to breathe:

- Eliminate fireplace and wood stove use.
- Drive as little as possible: car pool, use public transit or telecommute. For information on transportation alternatives, visit Valley Metro: www.valleymetro.org.
- Recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) use is prohibited during the advisory period.
- The use of leaf blowers on governmental properties is prohibited during the advisory period.
- Avoid using gas-powered lawn and garden equipment.
- Avoid activities that generate dust, such as driving on dirt roads.
- Stabilize loose soils.

PARTICULATE MATTER BACKGROUND: State and county agencies measure PM-10 and PM-2.5, which are extremely small solid particles and liquid droplets found circulating in the air. PM, or particulate matter, comes from either combustion (cars, industry, woodburning) or dust stirred up into the air. High levels of PM are typically created when the air is especially stagnant or especially windy. PM-10 stands for particulate matter measuring 10 microns or less. PM-2.5 stands for particulate matter measuring 2.5 microns or less. To put this in perspective, one strand of human hair is 70-100 microns in size.

WHO'S WHO?

The **Arizona Department of Environmental Quality [ADEQ]** provides a daily forecast for air quality. When conditions exist, ADEQ will issue high pollution advisories, health watches and alerts. Daily air quality forecasts are on ADEQ's Web site at www.azdeq.gov/environ/air/ozone/ensemble.pdf or by calling (602)771-2367. Those interested in receiving the air quality forecast via email can subscribe to ADEQ's forecast list at www.azdeq.gov/subscribe.html and text alerts at www.azdeq.gov/sms.html

The **Maricopa County Air Quality Department** issues No Burn Day restrictions based on a High Pollution Advisory or Health Watch. These No Burn Day restrictions typically occur during the winter months. To find out if any burn restrictions are in place, call 602-506-6400 or visit www.cleanairmakemore.com . Information is given in both English and Spanish.

To learn more about the Maricopa County residential woodburning restriction ordinance, view a copy on our website www.maricopa.gov/aq. Click on the direct link to the residential woodburning restriction ordinance: http://www.maricopa.gov/aq/divisions/planning_analysis/rules/docs/rwro9911.pdf

Valley Metro/RPTA provides eco-friendly public transit options to residents of greater Phoenix and Maricopa County, including a clean-fuel bus fleet, low-emissions light rail, online carpool matching and bus trip mapping, and bicycle and telecommuting assistance. Funding is provided by local, state and federal revenues and administered by a board of 15 governments working to improve and regionalize the public transit system. www.ValleyMetro.org

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