



Maricopa County
Air Quality Department



HIGH POLLUTION ADVISORY

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is issuing a High Pollution Advisory for Thursday, Dec. 25 for fine Particulate Matter-2.5 (soot) in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

The Maricopa County Air Quality Department has also issued a “No Burn Day” restriction for Thursday. Inspectors will be sent into the community to enforce the restriction. This restriction also includes individuals and businesses that have burn permits for open burning.

The HPA remains in effect through Thursday because elevated levels of PM-2.5 are expected as weather conditions, combined with already elevated fine particle pollutant levels, may result in concentrations exceeding the health standard. Drier air moving into the area over the last 24 hours will allow cooler minimum temperatures and a stronger morning inversion which will trap pollutants close to the ground, including smoke from wood burning.

ADEQ recommends that children and adults with respiratory problems avoid outdoor activities and suggests that the general public limit outdoor activity when the High Pollution Advisory is in effect.

"The forecast for Christmas Eve calls for stagnant winds leading to a strong inversion that will persist throughout the night and into the morning hours on Christmas day," said Eric Massey, Director of ADEQ's Air Quality Division. "While we expect some wind in the afternoon on Christmas day to help disperse pollution, we still foresee the lingering smoke from Christmas Eve to cause health issues, especially in the morning."

The Maricopa County Trip Reduction program and Valley Metro Commute Solutions 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, as well as outdoor wood burning activities.
- Drive as little as possible: car pool, use public transit or telecommute. For information on transportation alternatives, visit: www.valleymetro.org or www.sharetheride.com.
- 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, wood burning) 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.

-MORE-



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 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

Media contacts:

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality [ADEQ]

Mark Shaffer - 602-771-2215 desk / 480-433-9551 cell

Maricopa County Air Quality Department

Bob Huhn – 602-506-6713 desk / 602-526-7307 cell

Valley Metro

Corinne Holliday - 602-322-4492 desk / 623-293-0335 cell