



Maricopa County
Air Quality Department



HIGH POLLUTION ADVISORY / NO BURN DAY

MARICOPA COUNTY (December 30, 2011) – The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is issuing a High Pollution Advisory (HPA) for Saturday, December 31, 2011 and Sunday, January 1, 2012 due to elevated levels of fine particulate matter (PM-2.5). As a result, the Maricopa County Air Quality Department will enforce mandatory No Burn Day restrictions over the New Year's holiday weekend.

The air quality forecast suggests stagnant air, relatively low wind and winter inversions will trap fine particulate pollution close to the ground.

“Meteorological conditions that are typical for this time of year have lead to an accumulation of smoke in the air surrounding the Phoenix area this week,” said ADEQ Air Quality Division Director Eric Massey. “These conditions are unlikely to change over the weekend, and historically we’ve had high pollution events on New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day.”

“This is a big weekend for the Valley with many recreational activities,” states Maricopa County Air Quality Department Director Bill Wiley. “Woodburning restrictions are in place to protect our health. Please do your part to avoid adding more pollution to our air and do not light a woodburning fire over the holiday weekend.”

Smoke from wood fires creates small particles that pose a special threat to health. On days when air quality is forecast to approach unhealthful air quality levels, it’s critical for our community to reduce the risk of pollution from wood burning fires.

“No one likes to put a damper on enjoying this time of year,” said ADEQ Director Henry Darwin. “But we can’t ignore the real health impacts our activities have on our neighbors’ health.”

No Burn Day regulations state residents and businesses must refrain from burning wood in fireplaces, woodstoves or outdoor fire pits during the restriction period. This includes individuals and businesses that have burn permits for open burning. Grilling activities and gas powered fireplace activity is allowed on a No Burn Day.

This HPA also includes the following regulations:

- Contractors cannot use leaf blowers on governmental properties on HPA days.
- Hotels, restaurants and residents must refrain from burning wood in their indoor fireplaces and outdoor fire pits during a HPA. Open burning is also restricted.
- Off-highway vehicles are prohibited from being used during a PM-10 HPA.

ADEQ recommends that children and adults with respiratory problems avoid outdoor activities on Saturday and Sunday and suggests the general public limit outdoor activity throughout the day.

Valley Metro requests employers activate their HPA Plan. Residents and employers are asked to use these tips to help make the air healthier to breathe:



- Eliminate wood burning in fireplaces, stoves, chimineas and outdoor fire pits.
- Drive as little as possible: car pool, use public transit or telecommute. For information on transportation alternatives, visit Valley Metro: www.valleymetro.org.
- Avoid using leaf blowers.
- Avoid activities that generate dust, such as driving on dirt roads.
- To learn more about the air you're breathing, visit: www.CleanAirMakeMore.com

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 or health watches. Please visit www.azdeq.gov/enviro/air/ozone/ensemble.pdf or call (602) 771-2367. To receive the air quality forecast via email and/or text message please visit www.azdeq.gov/subscribe.html

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The **Maricopa County Air Quality Department** is a regulatory agency whose goal is to ensure federal clean air standards are achieved and maintained for the residents and visitors of Maricopa County. The department is governed by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors and follows air quality standards set forth by the federal Clean Air Act. The department offers air quality information and resources on its Clean Air Make More website. Please visit www.CleanAirMakeMore.com to learn more.

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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 telework assistance. Funding is provided by local, state and federal revenues; and administered by a board of 16 governments working to improve and regionalize the public transit system. Please visit www.ValleyMetro.org to learn more.

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