



Maricopa County
Air Quality Department



PRESS RELEASE

www.cleanairmakemore.com

‘No Burn Day? Don’t Burn Wood!’ Campaign in Maricopa County Kicks Off with Press Event

PHOENIX (Dec. 12, 2013) -- Officials from the Maricopa County Air Quality Department and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality announced today the kickoff of the “No Burn Day? Don’t Burn Wood!” campaign for Maricopa County.

Wood-burning fireplaces and chimineas often are the primary culprits in creating quantities of smoke during the winter -- most commonly during Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day -- that violate state and federal health standards.

These conditions pose a serious health threat to children with asthma, the elderly and those with respiratory issues. The particles can be absorbed into the blood stream and decrease lung function, exacerbate bronchitis and asthma and increase chances for heart attacks and premature death.

Another concern is if the PM_{2.5} (smoke) problem is not corrected, Maricopa County will fall out of attainment with federal health standards, which means more burdensome and costly regulations and the potential for the federal government to implement its own plan.

In a Thursday morning press conference at the State Capitol attended by a number of legislative, public health and municipal officials, ADEQ Air Quality Division Director Eric Massey said that the problem is related to communication and is something that we can control.

“The high concentrations that we experience during the holidays are the direct result of all the wood burning that happens throughout the community,” Massey said. “While we commonly call for No Burn days during the holidays, we tend to call them at the last minute. This means many people already have plans or don’t know that they shouldn’t burn.”

Maricopa County Air Quality Department Director Bill Wiley agreed and pointed to the added benefit that voluntary compliance brings.

“The two most common complaints I hear about No Burn days are that the government is being a Grinch and that we should keep the federal government out of our affairs,” Wiley said. “The spirit of the season compels us to remember our neighbors and the impacts that our actions have on others. In addition, without voluntary compliance, the EPA will have to get involved.”

All speakers at the press conference urged Maricopa County residents to be aware when MCAQD issues “No Burn Days” throughout the winter season and to not light wood-burning fires on those days. To find out if it is a No Burn day, go to www.CleanAirMakeMore.com, download the Clean Air Make More app, or call (602) 506-6400. For more information, call Mark Shaffer of ADEQ at (602) 771-2215 or Bob Huhn of MCAQD at (602) 506-6713.