



Southwest Clean Air Agency

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NEWS RELEASE

Outdoor burning is prohibited within Longview and Kelso city limits after December 31, 2000

The Southwest Clean Air Agency (SWCAA) is initiating a public education program to inform Longview and Kelso residents of outdoor burning prohibition boundaries. Outdoor burning will be prohibited as of December 31, 2000 within the city limits of Longview and Kelso. Rural areas of Cowlitz County are not affected by this impending outdoor burning ban. Bob Elliott, Executive Director of the Southwest Clean Air Agency, said "it is important for residents living within the city limits of Longview and Kelso to know that no outdoor burning is allowed after December 31, 2000." Land clearing burning is also prohibited within the city limits.

The statewide outdoor burning rule also requires that outdoor burning be prohibited in all areas where "reasonable alternatives" exist for outdoor burning. A first round decision for this issue is required to be made before December 31, 2000 and then be updated at three-year intervals thereafter. In southwest Washington, the first round decision for areas where "reasonable alternatives" exist is defined as all areas where there is a population density of greater than 1,000 persons per square mile that is contiguous with the city limits. For Cowlitz County, this decision impacts only a small geographical area adjacent to and north of the Longview and Kelso city limits. The exact boundaries for this area are still under development and will be publicized in early 2001 after the population density boundary maps have been finalized. Consequently, implementation of the December 31, 2000 burning prohibition for this area is being postponed a few months. Residents living within this affected area will be provided a public notice in early 2001 before the ban on outdoor burning is implemented.

The statewide rule requires that this first "reasonable alternatives" decision be updated at three-year intervals (December 2003, 2006, etc.) to determine if new alternatives have become available and additional areas need to be added to the burning prohibited area. There will be a public involvement and notification process associated with these future evaluations.

This Washington Department of Ecology outdoor burning regulation is listed in Chapter 173-425 Washington Administrative Code (WAC) "Outdoor Burning" regulation. The Washington Clean Air Act addresses outdoor burning issues at RCW 70.94.743 through 775. The general public can receive answers to their questions by calling the Southwest Clean Air Agency at (800) 633-0709.

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