

Air Quality Suffers from Stagnant Weather

Agency asks for voluntary measures to reduce wood smoke pollution.

VANCOUVER, Wash. – The Southwest Clean Air Agency (SWCAA) is issuing an Air Stagnation Advisory for Cowlitz and Lewis Counties to remain in effect until further notice. Stagnant weather conditions that settled over the area over the weekend are forecast to persist allowing air pollution to linger at ground level. Presently air pollution levels are good to moderate but a lingering high pressure system is expected to encourage stagnant conditions and excessive wood smoke accumulation could cause air pollution levels to rise toward unhealthy levels. Air quality forecasters currently expect a low pressure system to improve ventilation on Wednesday.

The Southwest Clean Air Agency encourages everyone who doesn't rely on wood heat to use instead their home's cleaner source of heat until weather conditions change. Those who must heat their homes with wood are asked to burn as clean as possible, using only dry, seasoned firewood. Proper burning practices should produce no visible smoke from the chimney. For clean burning tips, visit www.swcleanair.org/burnclean.html. Also, any outdoor burning should be postponed until ventilation improves.

“Cowlitz and Lewis County residents may notice increased smoke in their neighborhoods during these still, dry periods,” remarked Uri Papish, Executive Director of the Southwest Clean Air Agency. “During an inversion such as we are experiencing, air pollution from fine particulate matter can get trapped and build up as people continue to use their wood stoves and burn their yard or land clearing debris.”

(more)

“Please be aware of the conditions in your area if you need to burn. If the smoke is not dispersing or we have foggy, dry conditions, it’s not a good time to burn.”

Fine particles released by smoke from wood stoves, fireplaces, outdoor burning and automobiles are of concern because they can reach deep into the lungs. Air pollution can trigger asthma attacks, cause difficulty breathing and make lung and heart problems worse. Air pollution is especially harmful to children, people with heart and lung problems and adults over age 65.

Founded in 1968, the mission of the Southwest Clean Air Agency is to preserve and enhance the air quality in southwest Washington. Serving the counties of Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum, SWCAA is responsible for protecting the public’s health through the enforcement of federal, state and local air quality standards and regulations.

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