



COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Burn Bans

Goals of Burn Bans

The goals are to:

1. Protect public health and inform the public that wood burning:
 - Is causing prolonged pollution levels that could threaten to exceed air quality standards;
 - Is affecting public health; and
 - Must be temporarily prohibited at some level, depending on the level of burn ban called.
2. Help meet the 24-hour fine particulate (PM_{2.5}) National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS).

Background

RCW 70.94.473 specifies the criteria for declaring burn bans. The intent of the law is to utilize a two-stage program as an important tool in efforts to protect public health and to meet the NAAQS. However, when meteorological and air quality conditions change rapidly, agencies are allowed to issue a Stage 2 burn ban without first calling a Stage 1.

Pollution levels from wood smoke often increase at different rates based on:

- Meteorological conditions,
- Topography,
- Mix of pollution sources,
- Population density, and
- People's behaviors.

Declaring a Burn Ban

YRCAA has responsibility for declaring, ending, and changing burn bans in its jurisdiction and has appropriate staff available for burn ban decisions seven days a week. When deciding whether to declare a burn ban, we consider how long the ban is expected to be needed. If a ban is not expected to last for at least 24 hours, we may decide not to declare one.

Stage 1 Burn Bans

A Stage 1 burn ban:

1. Is based on meteorological conditions; and
2. Is intended to reduce emissions from fireplaces, uncertified wood stoves, and other home heating devices that use wood, coal or other solid fuels to avoid an exceedance of the 24-hour PM_{2.5} NAAQS.

During a Stage 1 burn ban:

1. All outdoor burning is prohibited;
2. The use of fireplaces, uncertified wood stoves, and other home heating devices that use wood, coal or other solid fuels is prohibited;
3. Certified woodstoves may be operated; and
4. Any device may be used in a dwelling which has no *adequate source of heat without burning solid fuel.

We will declare a Stage 1 burn ban when:

1. Professional review and forecast models indicate PM_{2.5} levels may exceed 35 µg/m³ calculated as a 24-hour running average within 72 hours;



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2. Forecast models determine that sufficient dispersion will not occur for at least 24 hours after the burn ban is called; and
3. Wood smoke from home heating is likely to contribute significantly to the PM_{2.5} levels.

Stage 2 Burn Bans

A Stage 2 burn ban:

1. Is based on both meteorological conditions and monitored air quality; and
2. Is intended to stop the use of all solid fuel burning devices (including certified wood stoves and pellet stoves) except where they are the only adequate source of heat.

During a Stage 2 burn ban:

1. All outdoor burning is prohibited;
2. The use of all fireplaces, uncertified and certified wood stoves, and other home heating devices that use wood, coal or other solid fuels is prohibited; and
3. Any solid fuel device may be used in a dwelling which has no *adequate source of heat without burning solid fuel.

*Adequate source of heat means a source other than a solid fuel burning device which has the ability to maintain 70 degrees F at a point three feet above the floor in all normally inhabited areas of the dwelling.

We will declare a Stage 2 burn ban when:

1. PM_{2.5} levels have met or exceeded 25 µg/m³ measured on a 24-hour basis;
2. Meteorological conditions have caused PM_{2.5} levels to rise sharply; and
3. Meteorological conditions are highly likely to prevent sufficient dispersion of fine particulate.

Ending or Changing a Burn Ban

When air quality and meteorological conditions improve, burn bans will be called off or changed from a Stage 2 to a Stage 1. Improved conditions are those that will increase dispersion and cause the predicted 24-hour PM_{2.5} running average to remain below 25µg/m³ for at least the next 48 hours. To end a burn ban, we must be confident that the ban will stay off for at least 48 hours. Otherwise, we will continue the appropriate level of burn ban.