



Wood Smoke Impacts Yakima Air Quality

During the heating season, wood smoke becomes a key source of fine particle pollution in Yakima County. Because of this, Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency (YRCAA) is asking those that heat with wood to be mindful of temporary burn bans and to burn cleanly and responsibly.

Wood smoke has the ability to severely impact air quality within the Yakima County air shed during the colder, winter months, YRCAA wants to keep smoke to a minimum for the benefit of the public's health.

During the winter months, stable weather patterns enable wood smoke particles to become concentrated. Wood smoke is a particular health risk because it consists of tiny particles that can be inhaled deeply in the lungs.

Particle pollution is linked to a number of health problems, including coughing, wheezing, reduced lung function, asthma attacks, heart attacks and strokes. Young children, the elderly and people with heart or respiratory illness are most susceptible to health risks from wood smoke.

To help you visualize just how small smoke particles are, think of a single grain of salt. Smoke particles are 40 times smaller than that grain of salt and have the ability to remain suspended in the air for a significant amount of time; Wood smoke also contains harmful compounds like formaldehyde, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and many other compounds.

When particle pollution is approaching the health-based limit, YRCAA may temporarily restrict wood heating, starting with all fireplaces and older, uncertified wood stoves and inserts. If conditions further deteriorate all wood burning may be halted.

Those who use wood as *their sole heat source* should apply for an exemption. [Click Here](#) for exemption form, Wood burners should also check current burning conditions *prior* to burning. Call the YRCAA Burn Info Hotline at 834-2050 or online at www.yakimacleanair.org While online, visitors can subscribe to receive email notifications of burn bans.



How to Burn the Right Wood, the Right Way, in the Right Appliance

Look Before You Light

Check the Burn Ban Status before burning. Call 834-2050 or visit www.yakimacleanair.org While online, visitors can sign up for Burn Ban email notifications.

Use the Right Fuel

Only dry, seasoned wood with no more than 20 percent moisture content, or manufactured logs/pellets should be burned. To properly season wood, it must be split and dried for 9 – 12 months. Burning seasoned wood produces more heat, as well.

Small and Hot

Keep the fire small and hot. Start the fire with small pieces of kindling and keep the fire moderately hot, adding larger pieces of split wood as required.

Check for Smoke

Watch for visible smoke coming from your chimney. Too much smoke means more air is needed to improve your fire. You must open the dampers to allow additional air into the stove. A 20% Washington State opacity (smoke density) limit is enforced. (picture below)

Make Your Home Healthier

Consider upgrading to an efficient, EPA-approved wood-burning appliance or switching to gas. Newer stoves are cleaner burning and more efficient. YRCAA has funding available to help with the replacement of an uncertified solid fuel burning device, contact Michelle at YRCAA 834-2050 ext. 100 to see if you qualify. Funding is limited so call today.



20% - Legal



40% - Illegal



80% - Outrageous!