



Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

# NEWS RELEASE

Office of Communications  
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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## **Burn wood safely and observe restrictions to minimize impact on health, air quality**

DENVER—With the arrival of colder weather, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment today released tips for seasonal burning in fireplaces and wood stoves.

Local weather and topography contribute to temperature inversions that can trap pollutants close to the ground, particularly in valleys. Wood burning can make the problem worse, particularly if burning devices are poorly operated, not maintained or burning unseasoned firewood.

The department recommends following these tips to minimize the impact on health and air quality:

- Burn well-seasoned wood that has been stored properly and allowed to dry for several months. It will burn efficiently and produce little smoke.
- Never burn garbage, colored paper or chemically-treated wood.
- Burn small, hot fires, adding small amounts of wood as needed to keep the fire burning vigorously to reduce visible smoke and use fuel more efficiently.
- Clean and inspect stoves and fireplaces annually to prevent the buildup of creosote, a highly flammable and toxic substance responsible for most chimney fires.

You should never smell smoke in your home, which indicates your device is not operating safely or efficiently. Smoke contains many of the same pollutants as cigarettes and produces harmful carbon monoxide. Breathing wood smoke has been shown to increase cardiovascular problems, irritate lungs and eyes, and trigger headaches.

### **Burning restrictions**

Residential burning is restricted to approved devices on declared Action Days in the seven-county Denver-metropolitan area. Restrictions apply to the device, not the fuel. Learn about approved devices under “Additional Information” on the Air Pollution Control Division’s [website](#).

Several other areas of the state have local programs and/or rules that activate either mandatory or voluntary burning restrictions. The Western Slope Air Watch managed by the Mesa County Health Department issues twice-weekly forecasts during winter months that may trigger mandatory restrictions within the Grand Junction city limits and voluntary restrictions elsewhere in Western Colorado valleys.

For further information, contact the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Air Pollution Control Division at 303-692-3281.