



*Serving Sutter and Yuba Counties*

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PRESS RELEASE  
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The Feather River Air Quality Management District is the local agency tasked with managing air quality programs for Yuba and Sutter counties to reduce public health impacts from pollutants. One pollutant of concern is fine particulate matter, especially in the autumn during the intensive fall burn season and in winter while residents are warming their homes with wood burning stoves and fireplaces. Exposure to fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, asthma attacks, heart attacks, and premature death. People with heart or lung diseases, older adults, and children are most likely to be affected.

#### Wood heating voluntary Spotlight program begins November 1<sup>st</sup>.

During the late fall and winter time (November 1<sup>st</sup> to February 28<sup>th</sup>) the District issues a recommended action for operation of wood burning devices, known as the Stoplight: Check Before You Burn Program. Wood burning devices such as fireplaces and wood stoves can generate PM<sub>2.5</sub> both inside and outside the home. If the air is forecasted to be unhealthy, the recommended action may be that residents with alternative forms of heat forego burning in their wood stove or fireplace. The recommended action will be posted on the District's website by 3:00 pm for the following day. Recommended actions will also be sent along with air quality forecasts. Check the webpage <https://www.fraqmd.org/stoplight-check-before-you-burn-program> for more information.

#### Agricultural Burn Program

The intensive fall burn season is the short window to time between harvesting the rice fields and the rainy season. Rice fields with invasive species or disease can get a permit and be placed on a list to burn as part of their Best Management Practices. The District balances the economic and public health impacts of the program as directed in the Health and Safety Code by the State of California, and authorizes Agricultural burning when conditions are optimal to minimize public impact from the smoke.

According to Whitney Brimm Deforest, the UC Davis Rice Advisor "Burning helps to reduce the severity of invasive species and diseases for the following rice season. Economic impacts of these pests are high, severely reducing rice yields. There are limited ways that farmers can treat these pests, and burning straw in the fall is one of the few non-chemical options."

Residents can check current air quality levels and sign up to receive daily air quality forecasts at [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov). The AIRNow service is directly linked to the monitor in Yuba City and current conditions. For more information please contact us at 530-634-7659 or visit <http://www.fraqmd.org>.

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