

CHECK BEFORE YOU BURN

Cold weather wood smoke monitoring begins Oct. 1

Contact: Kate Yeiser, kate.yeiser@multco.us, 503-410-4524

Winter wood smoke ordinance goes into effect Friday Oct. 1. Burning prohibited in Multnomah County through March 1 on days when air quality is forecasted to be poor.

Health officials also ask people to skip all unnecessary fires, even on days there are no burn restrictions.

Multnomah County's winter wood smoke ordinance goes into effect Friday, Oct. 1, and prohibits wood burning on days when air quality is forecasted to be poor.

But as we leave behind a scorching summer, slog our way into a soggy fall, and enter our 20th month of the global COVID-19 pandemic, health officials are once again asking residents to avoid burning wood whenever possible as a way to support neighbors with health conditions that make it more difficult for them to breathe in less healthy air.

Poor air quality and smoke can also worsen symptoms of COVID-19. A dry cough, sore throat and difficulty breathing are symptoms common to both COVID-19 and smoke inhalation. People in good health can also feel health effects from wood smoke, and may interpret those to be symptoms of COVID-19.

"We're all looking for those creature comforts, ways to feel comforted and cozy. A mug of hot chocolate, fluffy slippers or curling up under a blanket are great options this winter," said Nadège Dubuisson, an Air Quality Coordinator with the Multnomah County Health Department. "We're asking people to consider alternatives to a wood fire, because adding smoke to the air, on any day, can make someone else's day so much worse."

Multnomah County's [winter wood smoke ordinance](#) is in effect annually from Oct. 1 through March 1. This is the fourth full year of Multnomah County's wood smoke ordinance. Last year, officials issued 34 "Yellow Day" voluntary curtailments and no "Red Day" burn restrictions. Since the ordinance has been in effect, three "Red" wood burning restriction days have been issued.

During these colder months, homeowners, renters and businesses in Multnomah County cannot use wood stoves, use fireplaces or burn outdoors on days when the air quality is forecasted to be poor. This includes burning wood in:

- Wood stoves
- Fireplaces
- Outdoor fire pits
- [Chimeneas](#)



If an exemption is filed, wood burning can be allowed for people who use wood exclusively to heat their homes or who are on limited incomes. Wood burning is also permitted during emergencies such as a power outage. And there are no restrictions on using wood or charcoal for cooking.

Every year, Multnomah County regulates wood smoke during the cooler months because wood smoke from home heating accounts for more than half of our fine particle pollution on the average winter day.

Air quality can be especially poor during days of still air and [temperature inversions](#) — when cold air is trapped close to the ground. The rule helps protect people who are most vulnerable to poor air quality: children, seniors and people with asthma and other serious breathing conditions.

How it Works

From Oct. 1 through March 1, officials at Multnomah County Environmental Health will conduct daily forecasting in cooperation with the [Department of Environmental Quality](#) and the [National Weather Service](#) to identify potential poor air quality days.

When conditions suggest more pollution and an upcoming inversion (which causes air to become stagnant and trap pollutants close to the ground), Multnomah County will issue burn advisories or burn restrictions by 11 a.m. The restriction will then take effect at noon and remain in effect for 24 hours, unless an extension is warranted.

Officials will publish all mandatory curtailment notices on the county's [Wood Smoke website](#), share the notice through social media, including [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and push out any burn restrictions (red days) notice on [Public Alerts](#) ([sign up here](#)).

You can also [sign up to receive email alerts](#) about all voluntary (yellow) and mandatory (red) curtailment notices. Or you can call 503-988-0035.

On some days, the dial might show an arrow pointed to “yellow,” meaning “air quality is moderate,” suggesting a voluntary curtailment for that day. Rarely, when air quality and weather conditions are both very bad, that same dial will point to “red”: “Air quality is unhealthy. Burn restriction.”

During a curtailment period, people can report a suspected violation to Environmental Health by calling 503-988-0035 or emailing woodsmokecomplaints@multco.us.

If you must burn to stay warm, apply for a yearly exemption, available at www.multco.us/woodsmokestatus.

Why we need a rule

Poor air quality disproportionately affects children, seniors and people with existing health conditions. Short-term [exposure to wood smoke](#) can aggravate asthma, bronchitis and lung disease. And long-term exposure has been linked to cancer and higher rates of infant mortality.

After cars and truck emissions, residential wood smoke is the largest contributor to cancer risks from air pollution. Wood stoves, pellet stoves and outdoor fires account for 11 percent of the area's total cancer risk from air pollution, while industrial emissions account for about 1 percent of the estimated cancer risk from air toxics in Multnomah County.

[View Multnomah County's air toxics and cancer risk assessment](#)

Multnomah County's rule represents an effort to protect public health and also help the County remain in compliance with federal laws even as the population grows. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulates [six air pollutants](#), including particulate matter. In recent years the airshed that includes Multnomah County has come close to exceeding its limit on [particulate matter 2.5](#). Washington County, Eugene, Medford, Klamath Falls and Pendleton have all passed similar ordinances as local jurisdictions struggle to remain in compliance with federal air pollution limits.

If you must burn for heat, follow these steps to help reduce the output of harmful wood smoke:

- Burn dry, seasoned wood that has been split, stacked, covered and stored.
- Test wood with a moisture meter before burning (20% moisture or less is best).
- Use a cleaner-burning EPA- or DEQ-certified gas or wood stove.
- Burn small, hot fires. Provide sufficient air to the fire; never let it smolder.

Learn more about what you can do to reduce wood smoke at www.epa.gov/burnwise.

In addition to avoiding fires on days with poor air quality, you can also help limit air pollution on those days by avoiding the use of gas-powered equipment like leaf blowers and by avoiding driving.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



#CheckBeforeYouBurn

COVID-19 can attack the lungs. Wood smoke makes it hard to breathe. Help your neighbors who are avoiding and recovering from COVID-19 symptoms by skipping your fire, if you have another way to stay warm. #CheckBeforeYouBurn #COVID19

Do you use wood to heat your home and wonder if the Multnomah County wintertime wood smoke ordinance applies to you? There are exceptions for those who use wood exclusively for heat, have limited income, or during emergencies such as a power outage. #CheckBeforeYouBurn

If burning wood at home is your sole source of heat, you can apply for an exemption from Multnomah County's wood smoke ordinance, in effect between October 1 and March 1, at multco.us/WoodSmokeStatus. Households with exemptions must reapply each year. #CheckBeforeYouBurn

From October 1 through March 1, it's illegal to burn wood when air quality is poor, unless you have no other option than to burn wood to stay warm. Help everyone breathe better by checking burn restrictions before burning wood at multco.us/WoodSmokeStatus. #CheckBeforeYouBurn

Have you seen @multco's advisory dials this winter and wonder what they mean? When air quality is poor, a "Yellow" (voluntary no burn) or "Red" (no burn) advisory is announced, which applies to burning wood in fireplaces, woodstoves, fire pits, and chimineas. #CheckBeforeYouBurn

Does Multnomah County have a wood smoke pollution problem? Yes! Find out why and what the county's doing. multco.us/health/staying-healthy/wood-smoke-pollution

Phone? Wallet? Keys? Air quality? Add checking the burn status to your winter wood burning routine at multco.us/WoodSmokeStatus. Or, sign up for email alerts at bit.ly/CheckBeforeYouBurnAlerts so you have one less thing to remember. #CheckBeforeYouBurn

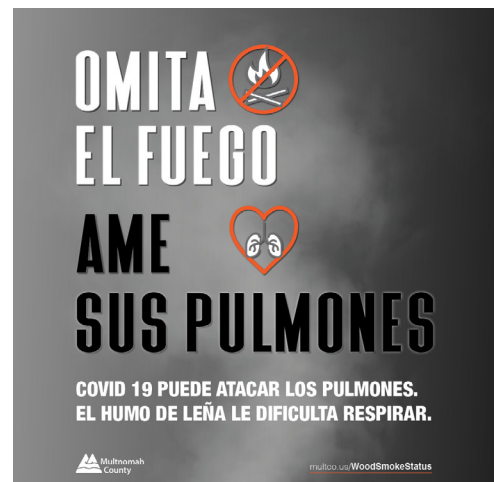
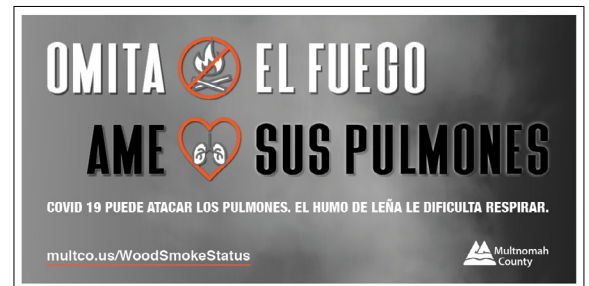
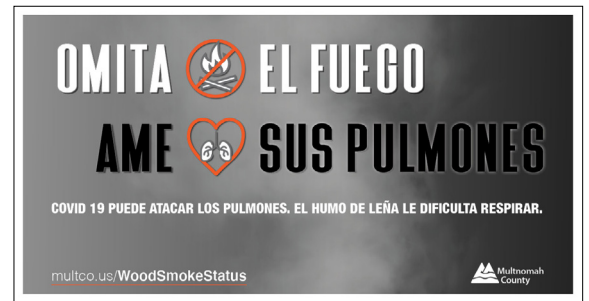
Do you build fires during the fall and winter? Get notified of when Multnomah County issues a wood burning restriction alert by signing up at bit.ly/CheckBeforeYouBurnAlerts. #CheckBeforeYouBurn

Baby, it's cold outside! We're highlighting our top ten ideas to keep cozy this winter, and none of them include a wood-burning fire. Tip #10: Cozy up under a warm blanket. Find out why we want you to skip the fire. multco.us/health/staying-healthy/wood-smoke-pollution

SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGES

#CheckBeforeYouBurn

You can help your neighbors who are avoiding and recovering from COVID-19 symptoms by skipping your fire. If burning wood is the only way you can stay warm, apply for an exemption from Multnomah County's wood smoke ordinance. #CheckBeforeYouBurn



SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGES

#CheckBeforeYouBurn

From October 1 through March 1, it's illegal to burn wood when air quality is poor, unless you have no other option to stay warm. Help everyone breathe better by checking burn restrictions before burning wood at multco.us/WoodSmokeStatus. #CheckBeforeYouBurn



PRINT MATERIALS



**CHECK
BEFORE YOU BURN**

multco.us/WoodSmokeStatus

Check for winter wood burning restrictions before burning in your woodstove, fireplace, Chiminea, or outdoor pit from October 1 - March 1 of each year.

  @MultCoHealth
 503-988-0035

 Multnomah County



**VERIFIQUE
ANTES DE QUEMAR**

multco.us/WoodSmokeStatus

Verifique las restricciones de quema de leña en invierno antes de prender la estufa a leña, el hogar a leña, la chimenea o fogatas al aire libre del 1 de octubre al 1 de marzo de cada año.

  @MultCoHealth
 503-988-0035

 Multnomah County

WINTER WOOD BURNING ORDINANCE IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY



From October 1 through March 1, homeowners*, renters*, and businesses in Multnomah County cannot use wood stoves, fireplaces, outdoor fire pits, Chimeneas or any outdoor wood burning devices on days when the air quality is considered unhealthy.

If bad air quality is expected, Multnomah County will issue a burn restriction, which will take effect by noon the same day.

*There are exceptions for households who use wood exclusively for heating, for those with limited income, and during emergencies like a power outage. There are no restrictions on wood or charcoal used for cooking.

Check wood burning restrictions before you burn:

multco.us/WoodSmokeStatus

Sign up for notifications of wood burning restrictions:

bit.ly/WoodSmokeStatus

Multnomah County
Environmental Health Services
847 NE 19th Avenue, Suite 350
Portland, OR 97232

有中文

có sẵn bằng tiếng việt

Disponible en Español доступно на русском языке

ORDENANZA DE QUEMA DE LEÑA EN INVIERNO EN EL CONDADO DE MULTNOMAH



Del 1 de octubre al 1 de marzo, los propietarios*, inquilinos* y comercios* del Condado de Multnomah no pueden utilizar estufas a leña, hogares a leña, fogatas al aire libre, chimeneas o cualquier otro dispositivo de quema de leña al aire libre cuando la calidad del aire no se considera saludable.

Si se espera que la calidad del aire sea mala, el Condado de Multnomah emitirá una restricción de quema, la cual entrará en vigencia al mediodía de ese mismo día.

*Hay excepciones para las casas que usan exclusivamente leña para calefaccionar, para las personas con ingresos limitados y durante emergencias, como cortes de luz. No hay restricciones en el uso de leña o carbón para cocinar.

Verifique las restricciones de quema de leña antes de prender fuego: multco.us/WoodSmokeStatus

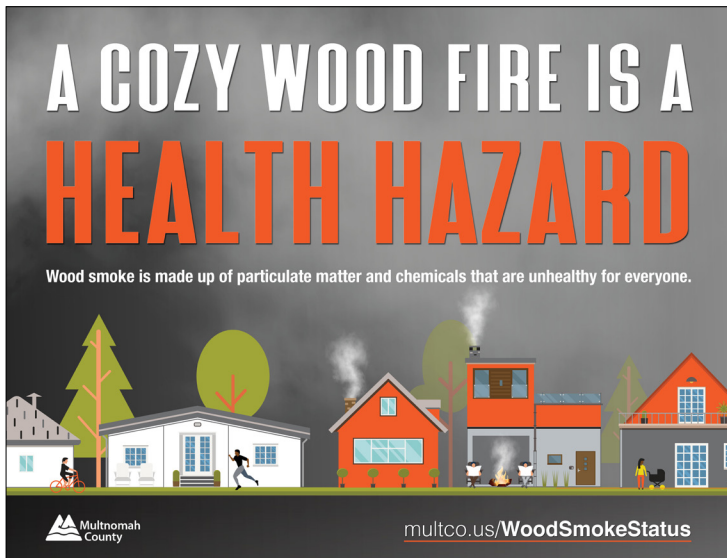
Regístrese para recibir notificaciones de las restricciones de quema de leña: bit.ly/CheckBeforeYouBurnAlerts

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有中文

có sẵn bằng tiếng việt

Disponible en Español доступно на русском языке



“A Cozy Wood Fire is a Health Hazard,” is available for print or download.

ADVISORY DIALS

YELLOW



Voluntary burn restriction

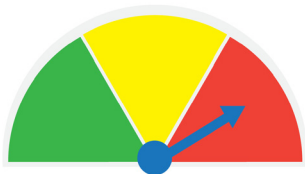
MODERADO



Restricciones voluntarias para quemar leña

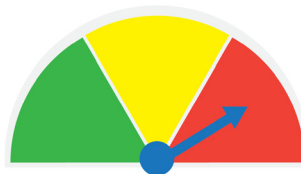
On some days, the dial might show an arrow pointed to Yellow — “Air quality is moderate,” suggesting a voluntary curtailment for that day.

RED



Burn restriction

INSALUBRE



Restricciones en efecto para quemar leña

Rarely, when air quality and weather is very bad, that same dial will point to Red — “Air quality is unhealthy. Burn restriction.”

CONTACT

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Wood Smoke Complaints

During a curtailment period, residents can report a suspected violation to Environmental Health by calling 503-988-0035 or emailing woodsmokecomplaints@multco.us.

Public Alerts for Burn Restriction Notices

bit.ly/CheckBeforeYouBurnAlerts

Important Links

- En Español: [Restricciones de Quema de Madera en Invierno](#)
- Wood Smoke Status: multco.us/woodsmokestatus
- Wood Smoke Pollution: multco.us/health/staying-healthy/wood-smoke-pollution
- Wood Smoke Ordinance: multco.us/file/68670/download
- Exemption Application: multco.us/woodsmokestatus



multco.us/WoodSmokeStatus