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**Yellow home wood heating advisory issued; residents cautioned not to burn**

The National Weather Service has issued an air stagnation advisory for the southern Willamette Valley through 6 p.m. Saturday, December 26. Stagnant foggy weather, along with cold nights and light winds, may cause local air pollution levels to rise over the next few days. Levels of fine particulate, a major component of wood smoke, could reach the high moderate range. As a result, LRAPA has issued a “**yellow**” home wood heating advisory for Eugene/Springfield and Oakridge.

“The current air stagnation advisory was issued on Thursday, December 24. Air quality is currently good, however it will likely deteriorate in the next few days as the use of wood stoves and fireplaces rises during the holiday” said Sally Markos, LRAPA spokesperson. The strong high pressure system creating an air inversion over the valley is predicted to stay in place through Saturday evening.

“During stagnant periods, fine particles from smoke and vehicle exhaust get trapped at ground-level causing a public health risk. Fine particles are inhaled deeply into the lungs, can aggravate asthma symptoms, and damage delicate lung tissues,” said Markos. The effect can cause health problems for sensitive individuals. People most at risk are those with asthma, heart or lung diseases, and older adults and children. Anyone with these conditions should avoid prolonged exercise or heavy exertion if they experience health symptoms, and follow their doctor’s advice.

Smoke from wood stoves and fireplaces is the major contributor to particle pollution during the winter months. The best way to reduce smoke during high pollution days is to switch to a cleaner form of heat and avoid using wood stoves or fireplaces. “During a **yellow** advisory, residents are asked not to burn unless necessary. If people absolutely must burn, we ask that they take extra precautions to burn cleanly by building small, hot fires, leaving stove dampers open and allowing fires to burn out at the end of the evening to minimize smoke emissions,” Markos explained. Residents are warned to not burn Christmas wrapping and packaging in their wood stove or fireplace because of the toxins created when these materials combust. Wood stoves and fireplaces should never be used as garbage incinerators.

LRAPA stresses the importance of following the home wood heating advisories. “By taking caution during yellow advisory days, we can avoid burn bans and the need for enforcement actions,” said Markos.

LRAPA is currently forecasting moderate air quality levels for Eugene/Springfield over the next three days, but that could change if weather conditions continue as expected and wood stove use increases. The agency regularly forecasts pollution levels and provides the community with a daily home wood burning advisory. Call the Home Wood Heating Hotline, 746-4328, or check [www.LRAPA.org](http://www.LRAPA.org) for current advisories.

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