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**Air Stagnation Alert could mean smoky skies for the valley:  
“Yellow” wood-burning advisory called**

The National Weather Service today at 2:20 PM issued an air stagnation alert for the Willamette Valley due to forecasted stagnant weather with cold nights and foggy mornings over the next several days. They expect conditions to remain the same over the next several days, and possibly into the next week.

“For us, that’s a warning that air pollution levels are likely to rise in the Eugene/Springfield area,” said Kim Metzler, LRAPA spokeswoman. “The cold air will combine with low overnight temperatures to produce a strong surface-based inversion that will keep pollutants trapped near the ground.” The effect can cause health problems for sensitive individuals.

“When pollution levels rise, fine particles from smoke and vehicle exhaust get trapped at ground-level, where they can be inhaled deeply into the lungs and damage delicate lung tissues,” said Metzler. People most at risk are those with asthma, heart or lung diseases, and older adults and children. They should limit prolonged exercise or heavy exertion if they experience health symptoms, and follow their doctor’s advice.

The best way to minimize pollution during this type of wintertime weather is to avoid using woodstoves and fireplaces if possible. “If people need to burn, we ask that they take extra precautions to burn cleanly by burning small, hot fires, leaving stove dampers open, and allowing the fires to burn out at the end of the evening,” Metzler explained.

Typically, wintertime pollution levels climb during the night and early morning hours, and then drop off during the daytime hours. However, the stagnation will cause the pollution to build up over several days.

LRAPA is currently forecasting moderate air quality levels over the next 24 hours, but that could change if weather conditions continue as expected and woodstove use increases. The agency regularly forecasts pollution levels and provides the community with a daily home wood heating advisory. Due to current air quality and the forecasted air stagnation, the home wood heating advisory for the Eugene/Springfield area is **yellow**. Residents are asked not to burn unless necessary, and then use extra caution to burn cleanly.

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