



BAY AREA  
AIR QUALITY  
MANAGEMENT  
DISTRICT

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SONOMA COUNTY  
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Jack P. Broadbent  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER/APCO

September 22, 2008

Dear Planning/Building Official:

On July 9, 2008 the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) adopted Regulation 6, Rule 3: Wood-burning Devices to reduce harmful emissions from wood-burning devices such as fireplaces and wood stoves.

The new rule includes a requirement that any permanently installed wood-burning device installed indoors in new construction or a remodel with a **building permit issued after January 1, 2009** be any of the following:

- a U.S. EPA Phase II certified wood-burning device; or
- a pellet-fueled device; or
- listed on the Air District's list of approved devices.

**Therefore, any building permits issued after January 1, 2009 should not permit conventional fireplaces, non-U.S. EPA certified woodstoves and/or fireplace inserts for installation in new construction or remodels.** Any gas-fueled or electric-powered fireplace device is allowed under this requirement.

A list of approved wood-burning devices for installation and remodels can be found at:

[www.baaqmd.gov/pio/wood\\_burning/index.htm](http://www.baaqmd.gov/pio/wood_burning/index.htm).

Wood smoke from the burning of wood contains fine particulate matter or PM<sub>2.5</sub> that can easily bypass the natural filters in the nose and throat and penetrate deep into the lungs. Health studies have linked long-term exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> with serious health effects such as aggravated asthma, chronic bronchitis and even premature death in people with heart and lung disease.

The U.S. EPA made the ambient air requirements for PM<sub>2.5</sub> air pollution more stringent following an extensive review of scientific studies on the severity of impacts that PM<sub>2.5</sub> has on public health. The Air District exceeded this national health based standard an average of 17 days in the past five winter seasons. Regulation 6, Rule 3 was developed to help address these high levels of pollution resulting from wood burning.

For more information on this new regulation, the health impacts from wood smoke, and educational material about fine particulate matter air pollution, please refer your staff or permit applicants to the Air District's website at: [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov) or call Eric Pop, Air Quality Specialist, at 415-749-5172.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey McKay  
Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer

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