

MEDIA RELEASE

AIR QUALITY ADVISORY AND OPEN BURNING RESTRICTIONS IN EFFECT FOR RED BLUFF AREA IN QUESNEL

(Feb 6, 2012– Quesnel) The Ministry of Environment has issued an Air Quality Advisory for Red Bluff area in Quesnel because of high concentrations of fine particulates and dust that are expected to persist until Tuesday.

Persons with chronic underlying medical conditions should postpone strenuous exercise until the advisory is lifted. Staying indoors and in air conditioned spaces helps to reduce fine particulate exposure. Exposure is particularly a concern for infants, the elderly and those who have diabetes, and lung or heart disease.

Open burning restrictions are now in effect for Quesnel for a period of one day. No new fires may be initiated and no additional material may be added to existing fires.

For more information on burning restrictions, see the section below entitled 'Mandatory Emission Reduction Actions.' For more information on current air quality, see: www.bcairquality.ca.

Tips to reduce your personal health risk.

- Avoid roads with heavy vehicle traffic and areas with wood smoke.
- Continue to control medical conditions such as asthma, chronic respiratory disease and heart failure. If symptoms continue to be bothersome, seek medical attention.
- Maintaining good overall health is a good way to reduce health risks resulting from short-term exposure to air pollution.

Additional tips for those with chronic underlying medical conditions:


- Stay indoors, keep windows and doors closed and reduce indoor sources of pollution such as smoking, vacuuming and use of wood stoves.
- Run an air cleaner. Some room air cleaners, such as HEPA filters, can help reduce indoor particulate levels provided they are the right size for your home and filters are changed regularly.
- Take shelter in buildings which have large indoor volumes and limited entry of outdoor air.

Mandatory Emission Reduction Actions

- As pollution may occur from open burning, the Director has suspended the exemption in the Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation (Sections 2(i) and 4(2)(a)) that allows for open burning of debris to occur in Quesnel without a permit or approval from the Ministry of Environment. For the next 24 hours, no new open fires may be initiated and pursuant to Section 4(2)(c) of the Regulation, no additional material may be added to existing fires. Contravention of these provisions may be subject to a fine under the Regulation.

Date issued: Feb 6, 2012

Date amended:


Douglas J. Hill, P.Eng.
for Director, Environmental Management Act
Cariboo Region

Voluntary Emission Reduction Actions

- Avoid the use of wood stoves and fireplaces unless the sole source of residential heat.
- Where wood stoves or fireplaces are the sole source of residential heat, use only CSA/EPA emissions approved wood-burning appliances and well-cured wood, and ensure an adequate supply of combustion air.
- Avoid backyard burning.
- Reduce the use and idling of vehicles.

Additional Information

- Fine particulate (PM_{2.5}) concentrations are currently 36 micrograms per cubic metre (measured at Maple Drive station) and exceed the provincial air quality objective of 25 micrograms per cubic metre, averaged over 24 hours.
- Dust (PM₁₀) concentrations are currently 100 micrograms per cubic metre (measured at Maple Drive station) and exceed the provincial air quality objective of 50 micrograms per cubic metre, averaged over 24 hours.
- Sources of fine particulates contributing to this air quality episode include wood smoke (wood stoves) as well as emissions from industry and transportation sources such as automobiles, trucks and rail traffic.
- This episode is expected to continue until there is a change in the current weather system.
- Real-time air quality information for Quesnel and other B.C. communities can be found at: www.bcairquality.ca.

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