

# LRAPA's home wood heating advisory programs: keeping the air clean in our communities

## Did you know:

The Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) administers a mandatory home wood heating curtailment program for the Eugene/Springfield area and Oakridge?

That under this program you can be fined up to \$500 for using a woodstove or fireplace on a day when home wood heating is prohibited or if your smoke exceeds a certain opacity or thickness?

If you live within the urban growth boundary of the Eugene/Springfield area or in the City of Oakridge, you are required to follow certain rules and the advisories when you use a residential woodstove, insert, or fireplace?

## What this means to you

The residential wood heating curtailment program is administered between **October 1 and May 31**. Residents have a responsibility to check the daily advisories to know when burning is allowed or is curtailed because of poor air quality.

## Why a curtailment program?

Smoke from residential wood heating is the number one cause of winter time air pollution in Eugene/Springfield and Oakridge. Smoke from woodstoves, inserts, and fireplaces contains fine particles known as PM<sub>2.5</sub>. They are inhaled deep into the lungs and can cause health problems for people. It is especially harmful for pregnant women, children, seniors, and people with pre-existing heart/lung conditions. Wood smoke also contains compounds that are known or suspected carcinogens.

The federal government sets health-based standards for criteria pollutants, including fine particles. Eugene and Springfield currently meet the standard with only a small margin of safety between being in compliance and violating. The City of Oakridge does not meet the standard and has been classified as a non-attainment area by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

LRAPA's curtailment program for Eugene/Springfield and Oakridge helps reduce emissions from woodsmoke on the worst winter days.

## How does the advisory program work?

LRAPA uses the PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard when determining home wood heating advisories. Advisories are determined by comparing current pollution levels and meteorological conditions with weather forecasts. Advisories are determined at 2 PM everyday and go into effect at 4 PM for 24 hours.

**Green** — Means air quality is good at this time and unrestricted use of a wood heating device is allowed.

**Yellow** — Means air quality is deteriorating. Residents are asked to voluntarily stop wood burning if possible to keep air quality from getting worse.

**Red** — Means air quality is reaching an unhealthy stage. Visible smoke from a chimney will result in a violation and fine unless the resident has an exemption.

## Where to find advisory information

The daily residential wood heating advisories may be found on the LRAPA website, [lrapa.org](http://lrapa.org), or by calling 541-746-4328 (HEAT). The advisories are published in the Register Guard newspaper. Residents can also follow us on Twitter

@LaneRegionalAir or on our Facebook page about smoke bans. We also send out text message alerts when wood smoke is banned. To sign up, text "LRAPAHWH" to 313131.

## Are there exemptions for residents?

Residents with limited income may qualify for an exemption, allowing them to burn on a red day but still keeping their smoke under the opacity limits. Exemption forms are available online or in the LRAPA office for Eugene/Springfield residents. Oakridge residents can apply for an exemption at Oakridge City Hall under a low-income or sole-source exemption. Exemptions must be renewed annually and expire on June 1. Even with an exemption, local laws regarding excessive smoke emissions must be followed.

The screenshot shows the LRAPA website's Home Wood Heating Advisory page. The header includes the LRAPA logo and navigation links: About, Air Quality, Programs, and Industrial / Business Permits. A search bar and social media icons are also present. The main content area features a sidebar with links to various programs and a central advisory table. The table indicates that Eugene/Springfield is under a Caution advisory (yellow background) and Oakridge is under a Prohibited advisory (red background). The advisory date is 01/01/2015, and it is updated daily at 2pm.

Location	Advisory Level
Eugene/Springfield	Caution
Oakridge	Prohibited

Additional information on the page includes contact details for the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency: 1010 Main Street, Springfield, OR 97477. Phone: 541-736-1056, Fax: 541-726-1205.

The LRAPA website's HWH page, [www.lrapa.org/181/](http://www.lrapa.org/181/), displays easy-to-read graphics showing current HWH burning advisories.

## Wood burning tips

### Being a responsible citizen helps the whole community

The health of your neighbors and the entire community is negatively impacted by exposure to pollutants from wood smoke. Excessive wood smoke also makes its way back into the home through poorly sealed windows and doors, causing unhealthy indoor air quality.

Burning wood can be an economical way to heat your home. However, burning improperly wastes fuel and causes harmful air pollution. Here are some tips to help you get the most heat out of your firewood:

Split your wood and season for at least six months. Some types of wood dry faster than others, so test the wood before you burn. Properly dried fire wood will have cracks on the ends and make a hollow sound when struck with another piece of fire wood. You will get the most heat from wood that has a moisture content of 20% - 25%. If you are unsure, bring a piece of wood into LRAPA and we can use a moisture meter to check.

Below: Examples of different levels of smoke opacity levels. Oakridge limits to 20%. Eugene/Springfield limits to 40%.



Store wood under cover to keep it from getting wet. Wet wood used in a woodstove does not produce as much heat as dry, seasoned wood. The fire boils off the moisture, wasting wood, making it hard to keep a fire going, and producing lots of smoke. Burning wet wood causes creosote build-up in chimneys, increasing the chance of a chimney fire.

**Never** burn garbage in a woodstove or fireplace. The compounds in plastic, printed material, and other trash produce toxic smoke when burned.

Burn small, hot fires and avoid closing stove dampers. Fires need oxygen to burn, and cutting off too much oxygen to the fire reduces the amount of heat from the wood, increases smoke going up the chimney, and causes creosote build-up.

### Check before you burn!

- [www.lrapa.org](http://www.lrapa.org)
- 541-746-4328 (HEAT)
- Facebook / Twitter (@LaneRegionalAir)



## Home Wood Heating Advisory Program

**EUGENE/SPRINGFIELD & OAKRIDGE  
WOOD BURNING CURTAILMENT PROJECT:**  
what you need to know about HWH  
advisories and responsible wood heating



**LRAPA**  
Lane Regional Air Protection Agency