

November 27, 2015

## AIR QUALITY BULLETIN

BC Ministry of Environment, Environment Canada, Fraser Valley Regional District and Metro Vancouver work collaboratively to manage air quality in the Lower Fraser Valley.

An **Air Quality Bulletin** has been issued for **Langley, Surrey, Richmond, New Westminister, Pitt Meadows** and **Delta** due to intermittent high concentrations of **fine particulate matter** that are expected over the weekend.

Smoke from local sources, such as wood stoves, fireplaces and open burning, is causing elevated and fluctuating fine particulate levels in parts of affected municipalities. Localized spikes in concentrations of fine particulate often occur in the winter months when wood burning is more popular.

Some of your neighbours may be more sensitive to fine particulate matter than you are – in particular, infants, the elderly and people with diabetes, lung or heart disease. People living in the neighbourhood who have chronic underlying medical conditions and who are sensitive to fine particulate air pollution may wish to reduce their physical activity until this bulletin is lifted.

Overnight temperature inversions and light winds, especially in the evening and overnight, are occurring in the region and are likely to continue until there is a change in the current weather, which is expected by Tuesday. These conditions may lead to elevated levels of fine particulate matter in other municipalities as well.

### How to improve air quality in your neighbourhood:

- Avoid lighting fires and using wood stoves or fireplaces unless they are your main source of heat
- If you must use a wood-burning device, minimize smoke emissions:
  - Burn only clean, seasoned wood
  - Build small, hot fires and avoid smouldering
  - Get your chimney inspected and swept regularly
  - Exchange older wood-burning devices for cleaner-burning and more efficient models through the [Metro Vancouver Wood Stove Exchange Program](#) or the [FVRD Wood Stove Exchange Program](#).
- Before using your fireplace or wood stove, check the burning forecasts for residential wood burning at 604-436-6777 for daily updates on whether wood smoke is likely to build up in your neighbourhood.

Information about real-time air quality readings for Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley communities and potential health impacts can be found at: [www.airmap.ca](http://www.airmap.ca) and [www.bcairquality.ca](http://www.bcairquality.ca).

### More Information

[Air Quality Status](#) website or Metro Vancouver Information Centre at 604-432-6200

**Media contact:** Don Bradley, Media Relations, Metro Vancouver  
604-451-6107 (office), 604-788-2821 (cell)

### **What is fine particulate matter?**

Fine particulate matter, also known as PM<sub>2.5</sub>, refers to airborne solid or liquid droplets with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less.

PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations tend to be highest around busy roads, industrial operations, major ports and areas where wood burning activity occurs. PM<sub>2.5</sub> can easily penetrate the indoors because of their small size.

### **Residential Wood Burning**

- Residential wood burning, as well as some industrial facilities, non-road engines, marine vessels and automobiles, are significant sources of fine particulate matter in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.
- Metro Vancouver and the FVRD offer \$250 rebates for trade-ins of older wood burning appliances for a newer, cleaner burning device. More details: for [Metro Vancouver residents](#) and [FVRD residents](#)

### **Air Quality Bulletins**

- Metro Vancouver introduced Air Quality Bulletins in 2015 as a way to keep people informed about local, short term air quality issues that are not widespread enough to trigger a broader Air Quality Advisory.

### **How To Reduce Your Personal Health Risk**

- Avoid areas with high levels of wood smoke and roads with heavy vehicle traffic.
- Minimize the amount of fine particulates inside your home by keeping windows and doors closed and eliminate indoor sources of pollution such as smoking, and wood-burning devices (e.g. wood stoves and fireplaces).
- The use of some room air cleaners, such as HEPA filters, can help reduce indoor particulate matter levels provided they are the right size for your home and filters are changed regularly.

*for persons with chronic medical conditions:*

- Continue to manage medical conditions such as asthma, chronic respiratory disease and heart-related conditions. 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.

Under provincial legislation, Metro Vancouver is responsible for monitoring air quality in the Metro Vancouver region, controlling industrial, commercial and some residential emissions, developing long-term plans and conducting emissions inventories.

To help reduce air emissions throughout the Lower Mainland, Metro Vancouver works cooperatively with the Fraser Valley Regional District, the B.C. Ministry of Environment, Environment Canada and other agencies to develop and implement emission reduction programs for businesses and local residents. Further information about air quality programs in the airshed can be found on Metro Vancouver's website at [www.metrovancouver.org/air](http://www.metrovancouver.org/air) and the FVRD's website at <http://www.fvrd.ca/airquality>.