

DO I NEED A PRESCRIBED BURN PERMIT AND/OR A SMOKE MANAGEMENT PLAN?

Is this Prescribed Burning being done for any of the reasons listed below?

- Prevention of high-intensity wildland fires
- Watershed management
- Range improvement
- Vegetation management
- Forest improvement/management
- Wildlife habitat improvement
- Air quality maintenance*
- Cultural burning



If none of those reasons apply:

Contact the PCAPCD at (530) 745-2330 to determine the right burn permit needed.

If this is residential backyard burning remember to contact your local fire agency and / or CAL FIRE for burn permit requirements.



Is the area of land to be burned

1. More than 10 acres; OR
2. Are the calculated PM10 emissions more than 1 ton (call the PCAPCD staff for calculation help); OR
3. In a smoke sensitive area?***



Complete a smoke management plan.



Obtain a PCAPCD year-round burn permit and if required a local fire agency/CAL FIRE burn permit.



No Smoke Management Plan Required.

* Air quality maintenance is burning with less smoke emissions occurring than a wildland fire (or wildfire), resulting in reduced air quality impacts.

*** A smoke sensitive area is where smoke or air pollutants may adversely affect public health or welfare (i.e. schools, hospitals, recreation areas, population areas).

Burn Day Information



530-889-6868 | 1-800-998-2876
placerair.org/burnday

Smoke Information



530-745-2330
pcapcd@placer.ca.gov
placerair.org/8126/Smoke

MISSION

The Placer County Air Pollution Control District's mission is to manage Placer County's air quality in a manner to protect and promote public health by controlling and seeking reductions of air pollutants while recognizing and considering the economic and environmental impacts.



Placer County
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

110 Maple Street, Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 745-2330 | www.placerair.org

Revised 10-2022

SMOKE MANAGEMENT AND PRESCRIBED BURNING



USFS Deadwood Prescribed Burn

Smoke Will be Visible



Placer County
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT



Public awareness concerning the benefits of prescribed burning for ecosystem health is increasing. More prescribed burning means more visible and frequent smoke. Smoke is important to manage as one priority of a prescribed burn to help protect public health and welfare.

What Is Smoke Management and Why Is It Regulated?

Smoke management provides standards and conditions to manage smoke generation and minimize the emission of particulates and other air contaminants from burning.

Smoke management practices include:

- Burn on a burn day
- Burn dry vegetation to minimize smoke
- Consider the weather to minimize smoke impacts
- Stop burning when health or safety is at risk

The Placer County Air Pollution Control District (PCAPCD) has adopted a Smoke Management Program based on the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) smoke management guidelines. Managing smoke impacts can help protect public health and welfare by improving air quality and visibility.

Why Is Smoke a Health Concern?

Smoke is a complex mixture of particulate matter and gases. Particulate matter 2.5 microns or smaller in size (PM2.5) is a pollutant monitored by the PCAPCD. These particles can easily be inhaled into the



Landowner Prescribed Burn Following Mastication Treatment
Photo by Placer County Resource Conservation District

respiratory system and cause respiratory health problems such as aggravating existing heart and lung diseases.

Not everyone exposed to smoke is affected. But those who are can reduce its impact by limiting smoke exposure.

The US EPA/USFS's Fire and Smoke Map at fire.airnow.gov is a useful resource for fire, smoke, and air quality data.

What Is Prescribed Burning / Prescribed Fire?

Prescribed burns include underburning, broadcast burning, and hand or machine pile burning. Prescribed burning also called prescribed fire is the planned and controlled application of fire to wildland fuels/vegetation on lands selected in advance to achieve any of the following objectives:

- Prevention of high-intensity wildland fires through the reduction of wildland fuels
- Watershed management
- Range improvement
- Vegetation management
- Forest improvement and/or management
- Wildlife habitat improvement
- Air quality maintenance

(CA HSC §39011, §42311.2 & Pub Res Code §4464, §4475)



CAL FIRE North Fork Prescribed Burn
Photo by Placer County

Prescribed fire has a long history in California. Native American tribes have used cultural burning on their lands for centuries.

Cultural burning is the intentional application of fire to land by California Native American tribes, tribal organizations, or cultural fire practitioners to achieve cultural goals or objectives, including for subsistence, ceremonial activities, biodiversity, or other benefits. (Ca. Pub Res Code § 4002.4)

How Is a Prescribed Burn Planned?

A prescribed burn takes place under specific weather conditions to meet management objectives outlined in a burn plan.

Burn plan information includes the amount and type of vegetation, burn location, conditions needed for burning, monitoring, contingencies, and immediate and long-term changes that will result from the burn.

Following a prescribed burn, future management should be considered because vegetation regrows and the effectiveness of the burn decreases.

What Is a Smoke Management Plan (SMP)?

Most prescribed burns are planned in advance and include a submittal of a PCAPCD SMP, if required.

An SMP can include all or some of the following:

- Owner's details and burn location
- Type of prescribed burn
- Type and amount of vegetation to burn
- Topography
- Weather conditions for smoke dispersion
- Identify smoke sensitive areas
- Smoke PM emissions calculations
- Mitigation of smoke if necessary
- Burn notifications

An SMP may be submitted for approval online using the Prescribed Fire Information Reporting System (PFIRS) or directly to the PCAPCD. ssl.arb.ca.gov/pfirs/index.php

The CARB Smoke Spotter App provides an overview on proposed prescribed burns, potential smoke impacts, and air quality. ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/prescribed-burning

Do I Need a PCAPCD Burn Permit?

PCAPCD burn permits are required year-round. An SMP may also be required dependent upon the location, acreage, and emissions from the amount of vegetation to burn.

Contact PCAPCD staff for further information and guidance. Contact your local fire agency or CAL FIRE to find out if a fire agency burn permit is also required.



CAL FIRE Mt. Howell Prescribed Burn, Colfax
Photo by PCAPCD