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Consider Alternatives to Burning of Storm Debris **Outdoor Burning Illegal in Cities & Urban Growth Areas**

With the passing of last week's storms, western Washington now faces the daunting task of cleaning up.

The heavy snow and ice storms resulted in hundreds of downed trees and broken limbs throughout the region. The Northwest Clean Air Agency reminds residents that outdoor burning is prohibited year-round for most Washington cities and Urban Growth Areas (UGA). To see if you live in a UGA, visit <http://www.nwcleanair.org/aqPrograms/burnBans.htm>.

Chipping and composting are the best options for storm debris, though other alternatives to burning are also available. You can find more information about alternatives to burning www.nwcleanair.org or by calling your local solid waste department.

If residents do have storm debris that's potentially useable in their home heating appliances, it should be cut into useable lengths, split and stacked under cover now so it can dry and cure for at least 9 months before use next fall. Clean, dry firewood produces little or no smoke when burned properly, while wet wood produces substantial smoke as much of the fire's heat is used to dry the wood enough for combustion.

Breathing smoke from wood heat or outdoor burning can have serious health impacts. Those at greatest risk are children, older adults (over age 65) and those suffering from heart conditions or chronic respiratory conditions, such as asthma, emphysema and bronchitis. The Washington State Department of Health recommends that people who are sensitive to air pollution limit time spent outdoors, especially when exercising. Find additional information at www.nwcleanair.org.

The Northwest Clean Air Agency is the regulatory agency responsible for ensuring compliance with federal, state and local air quality regulations in Island, Skagit and Whatcom counties. In addition to permitting and regulating industrial sources, the agency offers services that deal with asbestos, business assistance, climate change, indoor air quality, outdoor burning and wood stoves and fireplaces. More information about the agency is available at <http://www.nwcleanair.org>.

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