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Department of
Environmental Quality

Amanda Smith
Executive Director

Brad T Johnson
Deputy Director

GARY R. HERBERT.
Governor

SPENCER J. COX
Lieutenant Governor

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact:

Donna Kemp Spangler, Communications Director
(801) 536-4484 (office); (801) 554-4944 (cell)
dspangler@utah.gov

DAQ Launches New Alert System for Wood Burning Restrictions

Seasonal wood burning restrictions begin November 1

Salt Lake City, Utah – The Division of Air Quality (DAQ) today unveiled its new air quality alert system, in conjunction with the start of its seasonal Wood burn control program, which runs until March 1, 2014.

The DAQ developed, with public input, the new air quality alert system to better communicate the complex health implications and activity restrictions related to air pollution in Utah.

The new alert system helps to curb both vehicle and wood burning emissions. Wood burning restrictions aim to help reduce hard-to-see particle pollution that builds up during winter inversion periods. Restrictions are implemented as a proactive measure when fine particle matter (PM 2.5) from a variety of sources, such as vehicle emissions and wood and coal burning stoves or fireplaces, is increasing and has the potential to reach unhealthy levels.

“There are opportunities every day to help improve air quality in Utah,” said Bryce Bird, director of the Utah Division of Air Quality. “While we can’t control the weather, with a little help from everyone we can reduce how much pollution we’re breathing during an inversion.”

The new alert system consists of two parts:

Part 1 — Action Alerts: Three basic symbols to indicate unrestricted, voluntary and mandatory actions.

- Unrestricted Action (symbol = circle): Wood and coal burning stoves or fireplaces may be used, but please use them in a proper manner to reduce smoke emissions.
- Voluntary Action (symbol = inverted triangle): Voluntarily do not use wood and coal burning stoves or fireplaces. Reduce vehicle use by consolidating trips. Industry should optimize operating conditions to minimize air pollution emissions.

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- Mandatory Action (symbol = X): Wood and coal burning stoves or fireplaces must not be used. Reduce vehicle use by consolidating trips. Industry should optimize operating conditions to minimize air pollution emissions.

When mandatory restrictions are in place the use of solid fuel appliances may result in penalties ranging up to \$299 per day. If violations of the burning restrictions are observed by the public they should be reported to DAQ by calling 801-536-4000 during business hours or by filling out a simple form online at: www.airquality.utah.gov/Compliance/complaint.htm.

Part 2 — Health Guidance: The EPA’s national standard Air Quality Index (AQI), which is divided into six, color-coded categories that correspond to different levels of pollution and related guidance for individuals with health concerns.

The DAQ monitors air pollution hourly and provides a three-day “action” forecast on its website (www.airquality.utah.gov) to help residents plan ahead and adjust their activities during periods of winter inversions. In addition, for current conditions and updates, residents, businesses and visitors can call 801-536-0072 or 1-800-228-5434, and subscribe to the Choose Clean Air email alerts (www.deq.utah.gov/ListServ).

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