

Air Quality Flag Program

Spring 2019 Newsletter



AQFP Spring Challenge



It's that time of year! Join EPA regions, state and local air agencies and organizations that promote air quality awareness and participate in the 2018 Spring Challenge.

Spring Challenge participants recruit schools and other organizations to adopt EPA's Air Quality Flag Program. All organizations must register at dcwww.airnow.gov/flag during the month-long challenge (May 1st-31st).

The three participants with the highest number of registrants will receive a set of air quality flags, as well as a congratulatory letter and certificate that will be mailed to the head of your organization.

EPA Region 10: Thirty New Flags Now Flying

Hundreds of communities across the country participate in the Air Quality Flag program. However, we have seen little participation in the Northwest.

Some Pacific Northwest communities have serious air quality issues, and smoke from wood stoves and wildfires has become a common problem. To help tackle these concerns, EPA Region 10 launched an effort in 2018 to promote the Air Quality Flag

Program. Andrea Lindsay and intern Morganne Flores in the Regional Administrator's Division led the effort as part of the Clean, Green, and Healthy Schools Initiative.

Air quality flags now fly across the Pacific Northwest. To encourage schools and communities to adopt this program, EPA Region 10 has been giving away free flag program kits. Their focus was on schools, areas with air quality problems, and communities with environmental justice concerns. Their goal was to gain 30 new participants in 2018 and they were successful!

Region 10 still has 5 free kits to give away to organizations in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Contact: Andrea Lindsay, lindsay.andrea@epa.gov

Of the 30 flag kits, Region 10 has distributed:

- 14 to Tribal communities
- 25 to schools (including Tribal schools)
- 5 to community centers, clubs, and other organizations

Upcoming Activities

- Region 10 will give the last 5 free kits away on first-come, first-served expression of interest.
- Once the remaining kits have been distributed, they will no longer provide free flags, but will continue to promote and provide technical assistance for the Air Quality Flag Program.

AQ Flags & Wood Burning

Julie Ruiz, Air Pollution Control Specialist in the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District just started the Air Quality Flag Program to raise awareness of voluntary no burn days. Julie reports,

“We officially launched the EPA Air Quality Flag Program with Long Valley Charter School. A press release was in the February 9th edition of the [Portola Reporter](#). The flag flies on a City of Portola sign along Hwy 70 close to the front of the school. When it is green or yellow, it is 'ok to burn in all wood heating devices.' When the flag is orange or any other color, residents are asked to refrain from burning wood if at all possible. The District's website has been updated to show burn status for open burning throughout the entire air district and now there is place to view the 'Clear the Air' Check Before You Light' indoor burn status for the Portola area. A health advisory is posted and linked to the indoor burn status when weather conditions keep wood smoke in the breathing zone due to high pressure systems and temperature inversions. An information line is updated when health advisory is posted... 530-832-4067.”



AQFP Postcard

Planning outreach events for the spring and summer? Use the AQFP postcards to share the flag program message! Order your supply for free through NSCEP at <http://www.epa.gov/nscep> and search for 456F18003.



Education with Garden Flags

Jill Gallagher and Ashley Schalleur of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Southeast Regional Office (SERO) got creative with where to display their air quality flags. Visitors and employees are greeted in the lobby by a brightly colored flag that broadcasts the daily air quality conditions.

Thanks to Frank Defrancesco's fine craftsmanship, DEP SERO is able to display their flag on a stylish flagpole in the entrance of their building. A DEP Air Quality employee changes the flag daily. They report that DEP employees outside of air quality and people from the community are stopping to read more about the flags!

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