



NEWS

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HOLIDAY TRADITION ENDANGERS AIR QUALITY, CAUSES POLLUTION

Bay Area Air Quality Management District issues Clean-Air Guidelines

San Francisco, CA – What many Bay Area residents see as a holiday tradition is actually one of the leading causes of air pollution during the winter months. Smoke from wood-burning fireplaces and stoves emits harmful gases and toxic by-products that reduce local air quality and cause breathing difficulties in many individuals, especially children, seniors and those with heart or lung conditions.

During the holiday season, when fires in the hearth – along with automobile trips for shopping and travel – are more common, the dangers of wood smoke in the air become even more pronounced. Air pollution problems from wood burning becomes especially acute on cold, still nights when cool air sinks close to the ground and a layer of warm air above acts like a lid, trapping pollutants.

This holiday season, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District asks Bay Area residents to give the gift of cleaner air by following the following guidelines:

- ELIMINATE or reduce wood burning.
- NEVER burn holiday wrapping paper, glossy paper or painted wood in your fireplace. These materials can release toxic chemicals into the air when burned. Reuse or recycle gift wrap instead.
- If you're burning wood, use only dry, seasoned wood. Moist, or "green" wood smolders more, producing greater amounts of harmful air pollutants.
- Start small fires with softwoods (such as pine and fir) that ignite easily and burn fast. Add larger hardwood logs after the fire is burning well.
- Refuel while the fire is still hot. Small, frequent reloading will create less smoke.
- Check your chimney for smoke. Where there's smoke, there's probably a bad fire. Excess smoke means that the fire isn't burning properly.

The Air District has a free Woodburning Handbook with additional information and tips on wood burning. For a copy, call 1-800 HELP AIR or visit or visit www.sparetheair.org.

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